Gloria meets Sulu sultan heirs, to press Sabah claim

Story on PAGE A2

MAGAGALIT SI DADONG DYAN!

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Thursday, September 19, 2002 ★ 46 pages / 4 sections / vol. 17 / no. 283 P15 website: www.inq7.net

AN AVENUE of corruption, or so a director of the Philippine Estates Authority alleges about the President Diosdado Macapagal Avenue, an eight-lane asphalt road in the Manila Bay reclamation area financed by a P1-billion loan from the GSIS. JESS YUSON

₱1.1-B 'road to perdition'

GSIS-funded project overpriced by P600M

By Juliet L. Javellana

THE President Diosdado Macapagal Avenue (PDMA), a 5.1-km road at the Manila Bay reclamation area running parallel to Roxas Boulevard, is perhaps "the most expensive asphalt road in the country."

The eight-lane asphalt road cost the government a whopping P1.1 billion, an overprice of P600 million, Sulficio O. Tagud Jr., a director of the Public Estates Authority (PEA), said.

A P1-billion loan from the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) financed the construction of the road, which is intended to decongest traffic along Roxas Boulevard and to pave the way for the development of the 750-hectare reclamation area. President Macapagal-Arroyo inaugurated the access road named in honor of her father, the so-called "Poor Boy from Lubao," in April.

Tagud said only the 2.3-km portion built by Jesusito D. Legaspi Construction (JDLC), reportedly owned by a friend of deposed President Joseph Estrada, was overpriced. The rest of the road was built by Shoemart Inc. and DM Wenceslao Consortium.

The contract for the Central Boulevard Project, as it was originally called, was awarded in 1999 during the term of Estrada. But Tagud said the "price escalation" that resulted in the overprice was approved by the new PEA board appointed by the Macapagal administration.

"There is reason to believe that the PEA management colluded with the contractor (JDLC) to perpetrate this monstrous scam," said Tagud, who spent 20 years

P1.1-B/A15

Enrile says Meralco behind anti-coal drive

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE LOPEZ-CONTROLLED Manila Electric Co. is behind a concerted media and legislative campaign aimed at closing down the National Power Corp.'s coal-fired power plant in Calaca, Batangas, former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said yesterday.

Some legislators are pushing for the closure of Napocor coal-fired plants on the grounds that these emit toxic fumes.

But Enrile said the real reason had something to do with the finances of energy companies owned by the Lopezes. He said the Lopezes wanted the 600-MW Calaca power plant closed to avoid paying P8 billion in penalties, which would increase Meralco's power rates and anger consumers. Enrile said Meralco wanted to avoid a backlash from consumers.

"Unless Calaca is closed, Meralco will pay minimum take-or-pay penalties of P300 million per month or P8 billion until 2004 when the National Transmission Corp. is expected to finish new lines in the area," said Enrile at a press briefing in the Manila Hotel.

The former senator is representing the Philippine Consumer Watch (PCW), which has filed a suit with the Pasig City Regional Trial Court against Napocor's and Meralco's collection of purchased power adjustment (PPA) fees.

Napocor charges its customers a purchased power cost adjustment fee that covers for the cost

ENRILE/A16

PNP says int'l kidnap syndicates now in RP

METRO Manila is living up to its image as the kidnapping capital of Asia, attracting kidnap syndicates from as far as India.

The head of the National Capital Region Police Office yesterday said that a number of South Korean, Singaporean, Indian and Malaysian kidnappers were operating in the country, preying exclusively on their compatriots.

"Some of these foreigners have not been kidnapped by Filipino groups but kidnapped by their own people," PNP Deputy Director General Reynaldo Velasco told local television as he discussed a fresh wave of abductions that had embarrassed the Macapagal administration.

"The foreign groups right now are only involved in kidnapping their own nationals. So it's Koreans against Koreans, Singaporeans against Singaporeans and Malaysians against Malaysians . . . If they (kidnappers) are Indians, their victims are Indians too," Velasco said.

"This is the trend we are observing especially in kidnapping cases where foreigners are involved," Velasco said.

He said the NCRPO, in coordination with the immigration bureau, started monitoring the activities of these foreign kidnappers following the busting of a South Korean gang in early September.

"We found out that the people

PNP/A6

7 down; 14 KFR gangs to go

By Carlito Pablo and TJ Burgonio

POLICEMEN tailed a motorcycle-riding man who picked up a P2-million ransom in Tagaytay City on Tuesday, leading to "a brief firefight" with a kidnap-for-ransom gang in Gen. Trias in Cavite early yesterday.

Three ex-Marines were slain in the dawn raid on their hideout. The firefight damaged a police car, and glass shards from the smashed windshield injured two officers. One policeman was also hit by a bullet but was not seriously hurt because he was wearing body armor, officials said.

The toll could have been higher. Encircled, the kidnappers turned desperate and lobbed hand grenades. All failed to explode.

The slain were identified as Diosdado Santos, alias Dado, 39, a resident of Rim Ville, Marikina; Rodolfo Patinio, alias Bullet, 34, of Estrada Street, Olivares South Subdivision, Biñan, Laguna; and Eugene Radam, 34. Patinio escaped from Camp Crame last June with Pentagon gang leader Faisal Marohombsar, who was killed in a police-military encounter last month. The three belonged to the Mostrales-Patinio gang.

Yesterday's police operation prompted President Macapagal-Arroyo to say: "As you can see, in the end, the law catches up with them."

The President motored to the site, in Barangay Manggahan in Gen. Trias, to personally congratulate the police for "this big ac-

7 DOWN/A6

A DEATH scene in Sunshine Village in Barangay Manggahan, Gen. Trias, Cavite, where President Macapagal visits on Wednesday. ERIK ARAZAS

CNN report on al-Qaida camps 'old story'

By Martin P. Marfil and Carlito Pablo

IT'S an "old story," Camp Aguinaldo said yesterday in dismissing a CNN report that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front had established two new training camps for the use of the al-Qaida terrorist network.

But a field commander told reporters that they were not taking any chances. "We're looking at (that) possibility. In fact we are monitoring their activities. That's why our patrols are continuous ... to prevent the setting up of camps or (other) violations of the law," said Brig. Gen. Generoso Senga, commander of the 6th Infantry Division.

"Even if we have a cessation of hostilities, we have to make sure that no one violates the law," he added.

But Norberto Gonzales, President Macapagal-Arroyo's adviser on special concerns, noted that "all the dates mentioned (in the CNN report) were dates prior to the peace process."

Gonzales was referring to May 2002 when, as the President's back-channel negotiator, he signed two interim agreements with the MILF involving the development of former rebel camps and the separatist group's assistance in the pursuit of criminal

CNN/A16

'Tried and tested formula': What's that?

By Cynthia Balana and Christine Avendaño

BOTH houses of Congress resounded yesterday with calls for anyone--the Palace, the police or even Negros Occidental Rep. Jules Ledesma—to explain the "tried and tested formula" for dealing with kidnappers.

"If there's such a thing, we should perfect it," Senate President Pro Tempore Juan Flavier told reporters. He admitted the Ledesma kidnapping had caused paranoia among rich politicians, especially those with small children.

But legislators seeking an explanation can ask a colleague: Sen. Panfilo Lacson, a former chief of the Philippine National Police.

He told INQUIRER editors on Tuesday night that, based on his police experience, he believed the formula consisted of the following related elements: a news blackout to ease pressure on both the kidnappers and the victim's family, close cooperation of the victim's family with the police and negotiation with the kidnappers. He said ransom was "not necessarily" part of the formula.

Speaking of the release Tuesday of Ledesma's children, how-

TRIED/A6

Indon held for bombings in GenSan

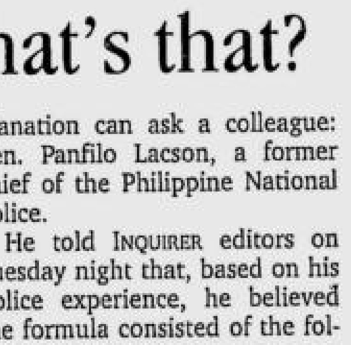
ONE of four Indonesians arrested in anti-terrorist raids Saturday will be charged with helping plot bomb attacks that killed 15 people in General Santos City in April, officials said yesterday.

At least two Filipino suspects in three bombings outside a shopping mall in General Santos on April 21 have identified Uskar Makawata as being among a group of Indonesians, Malaysians and Filipinos who planned the attacks.

But Makawata, 40, denied the accusations, saying he was a fisherman and a longtime Philippine resident.

"If you ask me how many thou-

INDON/A15


SAFE NA SAFE AKO DITO KAY MISIS -EHEK- SA TERRORISTS PALA!

James Bond would feel at home here

NEW YORK—It's a sign in a time of terror. The sign says—For sale: barely used missile silo transformed into a luxury residence, for only $2.1 million.

A silo is an underground chamber where a guided missile is stored ready for firing.

JAMES/A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. Light to moderate winds coming from the Southwest and West will prevail over Central and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/09/19/02

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FRONT PAGE

Gloria: RP to press Sabah claim

SULTAN'S HEIRS: President Macapagal-Arroyo meets the heirs of the sultan of Sulu led by (left to right) Sultan Bantilan Esmail Kiram, Haja Jainab Kiram, Sultan Jamalul Kiram II and wife Celia Kiram before their luncheon meeting in Malacañang Wednesday.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Sulu sultan's heirs assured of Palace support; emissary going to KL for talks

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo told the sultan of Sulu and other members of his extended family that she will pursue their proprietary claim over the island of Sabah.

She cautioned Sultan Jamalul Kiram and the representatives of nine sultanate families, however, that pursuing the claim would take a "very long time."

The President had invited the sultanate heirs to lunch at Malacañang yesterday. Also present was Norberto Gonzales, presidential adviser on special concerns, who was instructed to leave for Kuala Lumpur at the "soonest" to start negotiations with Malaysia.

Gonzales told a later news conference that the President has recognized that the sultanate's heirs "may have been neglected in the past."

Historical debt

He said Ms Macapagal felt the country owed a "historical debt" to the sultanate.

Gonzales said the President asked the heirs if they would again place their trust in the government to negotiate with Malaysia in their behalf. He said she warned them that pursuing the sovereignty claim would take a very long time.

"The President was very precise—she wants the heirs to be protected in terms of their future... and that (involves) proprietary rights (over Sabah)," Gonzales said.

He said that for one thing, the heirs could ask Malaysia to substantially increase the paltry 5,300 ringgit (P73,140) annual rent it pays them.

"Maybe we can find a more reasonable rent," Gonzales said.

While he would soon be flying to Kuala Lumpur to start negotiations, he said he wanted to wait for recommendations from the newly revived Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (Ledac) on the Sabah claim.

The council, which was originally formed in 1993, was revived following the recent mass deportation of Filipinos from Sabah.

Gonzales said it was "strongly recommended" that the sultanate heirs sit in the Ledac on Sabah.

At the same briefing, Sultan Jamalul Kiram III said the heirs stopped talking to the government in 1989 after experiencing several letdowns since the time of President Diosdado Macapagal, the current President's late father.

"The way I look at it, the President is sincere. (But) if (nothing happens), then we'll ask another country to help us," Kiram said.

He said "a lot of countries" were interested in helping them pursue their claim. He did not identify the countries, except to say they had blood ties with the Muslim royal families in Asia-Pacific and "further."

Kiram denied he was building a "royal army" to take over Sabah. What they have is a "royal security force," he said.

Sultan Bantilan Esmail Kiram, who takes over as officer in charge when the sultan is away, said they want to settle the claim issue amicably.

"The administration is helping (us). The President's committed to supporting our rights over Sabah," he said.

He said they expect Ms Macapagal to personally talk to Malaysian Prime Minister Mohamad Mahathir about the claim.

The claim is based on the proprietary rights of the southern Philippines Islamic sultanate, to which the sultan of Brunei had ceded Sabah in the 18th century to thank them for their aid in war.

The territorial dispute first cropped up when Malaysia gained independence from Britain in 1963. *With an AFP report*

No sub-standard materials, no overpricing, says Naia 3 contractor

By Norman Bordadora

THE JAPANESE contractor of the Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport has denied that it used sub-standard materials and equipment for the construction of the controversial terminal.

Toshio Hori, general manager of the Takenaka Corp., added that there was also no overpricing of the materials used in the multibillion peso project, contrary to the allegations of presidential adviser Gloria Tan Climaco.

"We categorically deny such allegation and assure you that all the material and equipment purchased and installed in your project has been approved by your consultants, is of first grade quality and is not inferior in any way," Hori said.

Hori made the denial in a letter to the Philippine International Air Terminals Co., Inc., following newspaper reports that alleged Takenaka's use of substandard materials and equipment.

"The particular equipment the articles referred to as switches (actually switchgear assemblies) were purchased by our subcontractor Siemens from Fuji Haya, which is incidentally a Philippine company," Hori said.

He added that the equipment in question were made in the Philippines under license from Asea Brown Boveri, "one of the leaders in making switchgear assemblies."

Hori denied that Fuji Haya switchgears cost more than those made exclusively by Siemens.

"This is part of our policy to encourage all our subcontractors and suppliers to purchase Philippine made products to help the local economy," he said.

How to deal with priests' sexual misconduct

KIDAPAWAN CITY—The Catholic Church will come up with a comprehensive set of rules on how to deal with sexual misconduct by priests.

This, as around 50 priests from the dioceses of Kidapawan, Marbel and Cotabato gathered here for a two-day assembly to discuss the issues.

"It will be used by the church to provide just and effective response to the allegations of sexual misconduct by priests... we look into the punishment that must be meted," Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president and Cotabato Archbishop Orlando Quevedo.

Quevedo said the CBCP is set to approve in July next year the comprehensive protocol covering three identified cases of sexual misconduct by priests: Abuse of minors, same-sex offenses and relationship with women.

Quevedo said the Church is working on the third draft of the protocol on abuse of minors.

Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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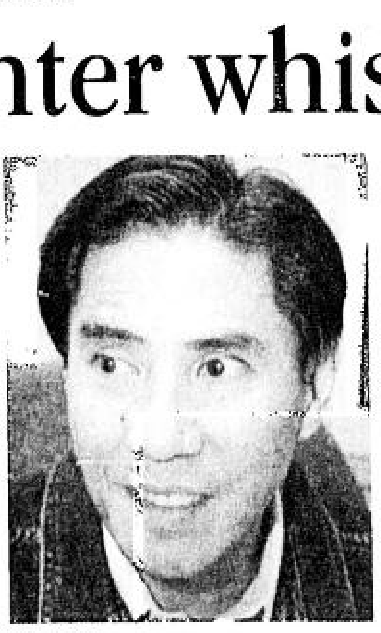
'WHY PUNISH ME?'

Lung Center whistle-blower gets axe

By Armand Nocum



DAYRIT

THE LUNG Center of the Philippines official who blew the whistle on a reported multimillion-peso fund scam at the government hospital yesterday decried his "persecution" at the hands of his superiors at the Department of Health.

Dr. Jose Pepito Amores, LCP deputy director for hospital support services, specifically pointed to Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit as the one who gave him a hard time after he made his revelation.

"This is how it is for whistle-blowers, you are persecuted," Amores told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Dayrit recently ordered Amores' separation from the service effective Sept. 30 for being non-CESO (career executive service officer).

Amores had exposed an alleged scheme involving LCP funds invested by hospital director Dr. Fernando M. Melendres and other ranking hospital officials. The revelations resulted in Melendres' suspension.

"Why punish me? I have no fault. The lesson here is: Don't be a whistle-blower, be a part of the graft," Amores said.

He said it was apparent that he was singled out by Dayrit because other LCP officers were also non-CESO. He pointed to Dr. Dina Diaz, whom Dayrit appointed to replace Melendres in an acting capacity, as being one of them.

Melendres was appointed to head the LCP by deposed President Joseph Estrada. He is an uncle of one of Estrada's reported mistresses, former actress Joy Melendres.

Early this year, Amores filed a complaint of plunder against Melendres with the Ombudsman. He accused Melendres of using up to P150 million in LCP funds to invest in questionable investments.

He said the bulk of the funds had been earmarked for the construction of the unfinished portion of the LCP.

Instead of using the money for its intended purpose, Melendres allegedly deposited it in a Veterans Bank investment management account (IMA). Amores said what made the move irregular was that it was done without an LCP board resolution.

He pointed to an opinion by the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel that government agencies like hospitals should not invest in IMAs as these could be lost at anytime and the hospitals were service, not investment-oriented, firms.

"He (Melendres) should have used the money for its intended purpose or bought medical equipment to improve services," Amores said.

The INQUIRER tried to reach Dayrit through his mobile phone to no avail. He also did not respond to a text message from this reporter.

For his part, Melendres denied having entered into an IMA, saying what he did was place the money in a "special time deposit" at the Veterans Bank from February to June this year.

He said he wanted the money to grow before it was used to pay for the construction work. He said his action was covered by an LCP board resolution. Dayrit heads the LCP board.

"I did not enter into an IMA. I did not sign anything for an IMA. They wanted me to, but I asked the OGCC, which said I should not do so," Melendres said. He did not say who "they" were.

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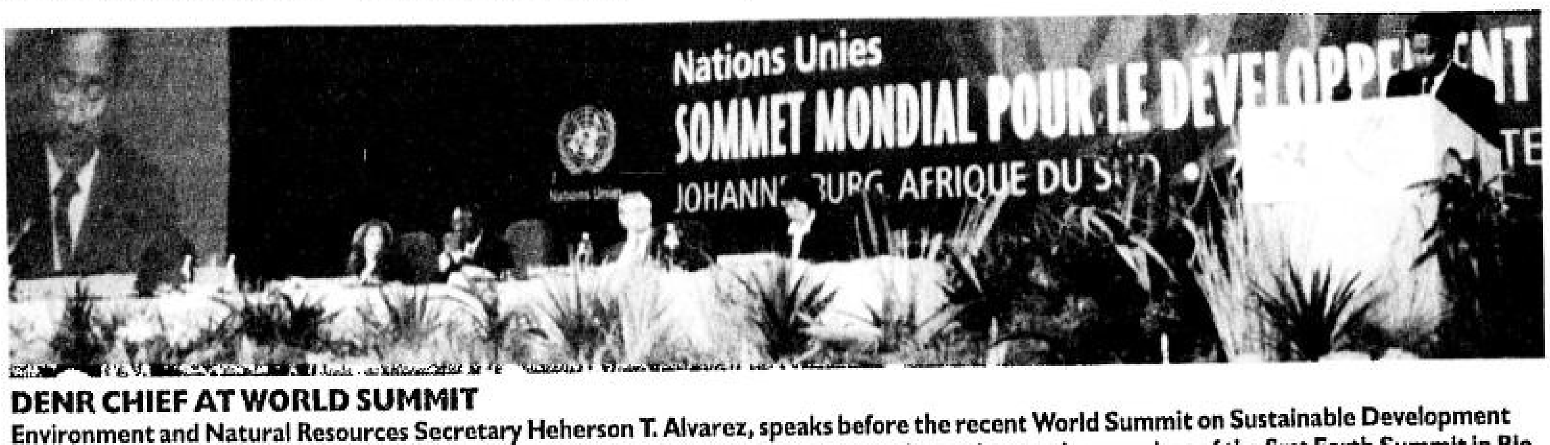
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JOHANN BURG, AFRIQUE DU S

DENR CHIEF AT WORLD SUMMIT

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Heherson T. Alvarez, speaks before the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he rallied world leaders to commit themselves to the promises of the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the WSSD "to achieve the fullness of our humanity and the completion of our social evolution."

HOMELESS IN UTRECHT

Jobless, Joma faces eviction

LUCENA CITY—Jose Ma. Sison, the self-exiled founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines yesterday said he is facing the prospect of being homeless after the Dutch government cut off his social welfare benefits.

He said he had strongly protested the latest action by the Dutch government against him, saying it deprives him of "due process, demonizes and incites public hatred" against him.

The Dutch action came after the United States declared the CPP and the New People's Army a terrorist organization.

Sanction vs terrorism

"In the strongest terms, I hereby protest that your *sanctieregeling terrorisme* (sanction regulation against terrorism) 2002 III, issued on 13 August 2002, criminalizes me as a terrorist," Sison said in his letter to Dutch Foreign Minister J.G. de Hoop Scheffer.

Sison cited the freezing of his joint bank account with his wife, Julieta Sison de Lima. The bank account, according to him, receives cash remittances from the Dutch government as welfare benefits.

And if the persecution against him would continue, the top Philippine communist leader said he would soon find himself and his family homeless.

"No less than your agency for social welfare has suggested to me in so many polite but threatening words in its 10 September 2002 letter that I may be thrown out of the house where I live and be separated from my family anytime," he said in the letter.

Political refugee

He reminded De Hoop Scheffer of his status as a recognized political refugee under the protection of the Refugee Convention and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (EVRM).

But in his earlier mail to the INQUIRER, Sison said he did not feel besieged under the present situation.

"In fact, I enjoy the support and encouragement of millions of our compatriots at home who want to liberate themselves from the oppression and exploitation inflicted by the US and the exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords," Sison said.

'Bare subsistence'

"To some extent, I am happy that there is a public airing of the fact that I have a small joint bank account with my wife and that the measly amount of money in this account comes from a social welfare agency for our bare subsistence," he said.

Sison said it was now clear that they have been living in poverty, "contrary to the malicious claims of our detractors in the Philippines that we live in luxury in The Netherlands."

In a letter to another Dutch official, Sison said they are now being threatened with being thrown into the streets, despite official assurance of temporary use of the apartment "pending the next whim of those who play the role of inscrutable gods."

"We now face not only the danger of suffering hunger, lack of water and electricity and ill health without medical insurance but also the ignominy of being accused of fraud for failure to pay for goods and services that have been delivered to us," he said. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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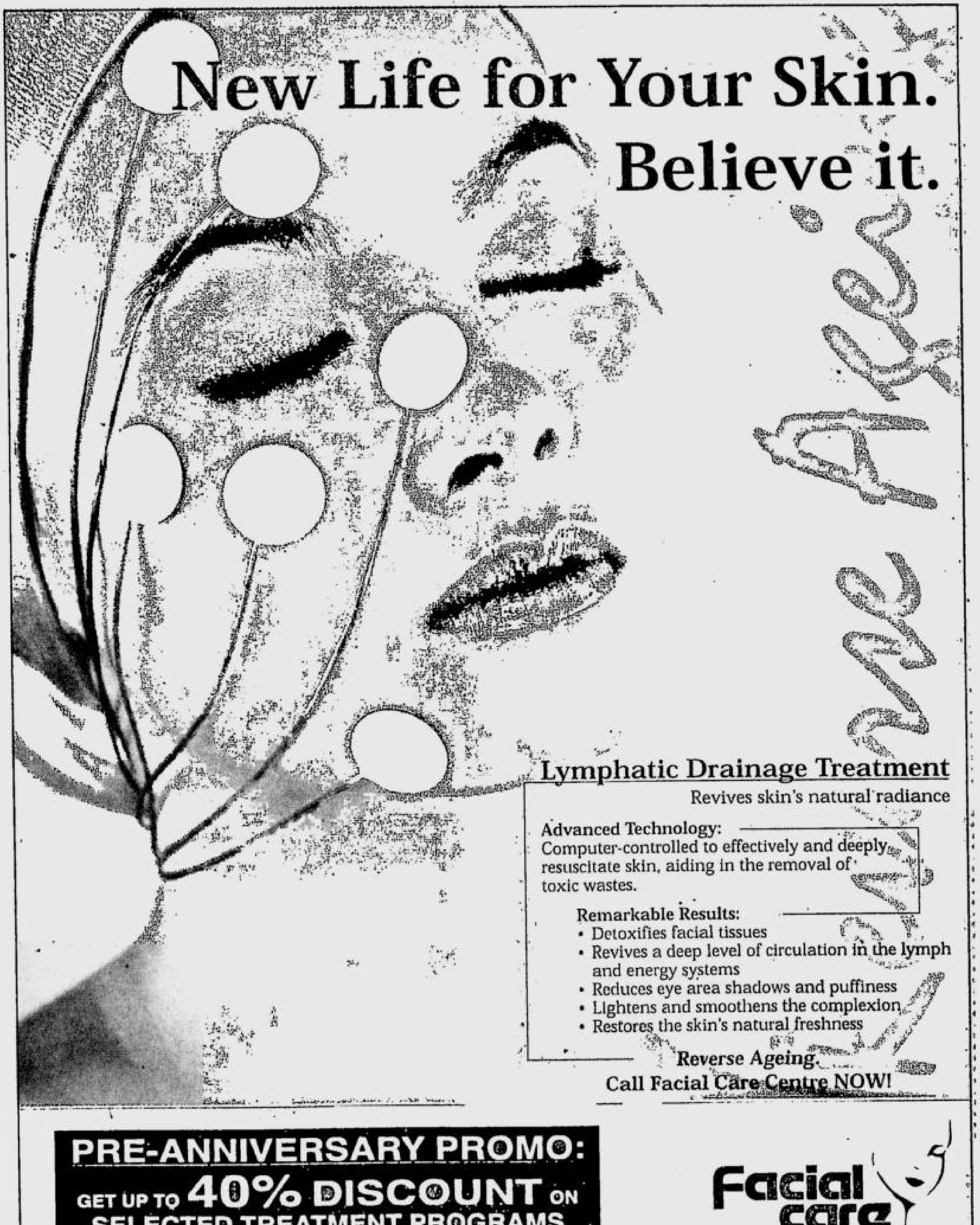

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GLORIA'S 'POWER' TEAM

'Gang in Black' asked: Why are we in the red?

By C. Balana and R. Nazareno

OPPOSITION Sen. Edgardo Angara said yesterday President Macapagal-Arroyo and the four Cabinet members who posed like the "Men in Black" looked more like the "Gang in Black" who should be made to answer for the gross mismanagement of the country's finances.

Angara said the Senate should convene its oversight committee and make the five key players in the Macapagal administration explain why the government is deep in red ink and borrowing money recklessly.

"The Malacañang gang should have posed in red, not black, to symbolize the state of the country's finances," he said.

Angara said the government had no significant investments to show for its huge debts, even as it continued to borrow money and revenue collections continued to decline.

This sad state of affairs, Angara said, was particularly embarrassing to the President, who had anchored her economic program on a balanced budget.

He said the country's budget deficit stood at P133.1 billion as of July, or P3.1 billion over the P130 billion targeted deficit for the entire year.

Government borrowing for the first 18 months has reached P138 billion. The debt stock covering the national government and its other offices and instrumentalities is more than P3 trillion.

Angara said the Macapagal administration borrowed in its first year in office P100 billion more than Ramos and Estrada did.

He refuted claims the administration has been getting favorable rates in its foreign borrowings, pointing out the interest rate charged the Philippines was 13 percent a year, the highest in the Asia-Pacific region.

The value of Philippine bonds has deteriorated in the international market, he said.

Angara said Malacañang should stop the heavy foreign borrowing and concentrate instead on improving revenue collections and exploiting domestic resources.

He said the promotion of retail bonds, such as during the time of former national treasurer Leonila Briones, should be carried out.

He pointed out the President's economic team was dominated by former investment bankers, whose tendency was to borrow money rather than come up with creative finance policies.

Some members of that economic team, which is led by Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, have been urged by Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta to cut short the global investment roadshow they are currently on to attract investors to the country.

"They should cut short their trip and just go home to save money and spare the country from further embarrassment," she said.

She said reports showed the first stops of the roadshow in Asia were an "undeniable flop."

The roadshow "was playing to near-empty meeting rooms in Hong Kong and Singapore," Oreta said.

Oreta said Camacho should "consider scrapping the European leg of the trip because his team would only be wasting energy trying to sell the country to investors amid mounting concerns about the administration's capability to manage the yawning deficit."

Oreta said "the investors who bothered to show up in Hong Kong and Singapore were more interested in learning how the Macapagal administration intends to tame the budget deficit and cut corruption in government."

Oreta also said the Camacho mission could not convince foreign institutions to invest in Philippine debt instruments because even the roadshow's sponsor, Deutsche Bank, had "expressed misgivings over the country's huge budget deficit and borrowing binge strategy." Camacho used to be a Deutsche Bank executive.

Oreta said that in the Hong Kong leg, which was led by Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II, "representatives of only seven financial institutions bothered to show up."

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Let UN define RP stand on US-Iraq standoff, House leader urges Palace

By Juliet L. Javellana, Rocky Nazareno, Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Christine O. Avendaño

THE ADMINISTRATION need not be confused in its policy toward the US-Iraq imbroglio.

"The bottom line is what the United Nations decides on because we have no choice but to abide by that decision," said Deputy Speaker for the Visayas Rep. Raul Gonzalez in a phone interview yesterday.

Gonzalez, who represents Iloilo City, contradicted President Macapagal-Arroyo who had said the RP-US Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951 could be invoked to justify the country's support for any US military action against Iraq.

"I think the President misconstrued the applicability of the MDT, which only applies if an attack occurs in the Pacific. What really governs us is the UN Charter by virtue of our membership in the international body," Gonzalez said.

The MDT binds the Philippines and the US to come to each other's aid in case of a direct attack by hostile forces on each other's territory.

Gonzalez also debunked the claim of Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. and former Senate president Jovito Salonga that the country could not take part in any action against Iraq without the approval of Congress.

"The moment the Security Council passes a resolution calling for the use of force against Iraq, we are ipso facto (by the act itself) involved by virtue of our UN membership," Gonzalez said.

He said Articles 42, 43, 44 and 45 of the UN Charter mandate member-states to provide armed forces and facilities, including air space and berthing rights, to the UN.

"The Philippines cannot run away from this responsibility," Gonzalez said, although he said this did not mean the country had to send troops. Humanitarian assistance and allowing the use of our airspace would suffice, he said.

He noted that Subic was used as a refueling stop for US aircraft during the Gulf War in 1990.

Gonzalez said the government was apparently confused about its policy because it immediately supported US President George W. Bush when he called for military action against Iraq. Bush subsequently coursed his military campaign through the UN.

Iraq has since informed the UN that it would allow the reentry of weapons inspectors into the country without conditions.

Wait and see

Negros Occidental Rep. Apolinario Lozada, chair of the House foreign relations committee, said that in the light of this latest development, the government should adopt a wait-and-see attitude with regard to the situation in the Middle East.

The US suspects Iraq of building weapons of mass destruction which could end up with the al-Qaida terrorist network of Osama bin Laden.

"That is really the root of the problem. The next question is what will America do next after Iraq has agreed (to allow UN inspections)," Lozada said.

Opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel said President Macapagal should seek Congressional approval before allowing any American use of our airspace or military bases for air strikes against Iraq.

He noted that "it is clear the President has not ruled out the possibility of the Philippines coming to the assistance of the US in case the latter decides to attack Iraq.

"So that the President would not be placed in an awkward position, it would be best that she got a mandate from Congress," Pimentel said in a statement.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said the government's flip-flopping on Iraq showed that it was merely following the US position and that it was "hypersensitive" to criticism by American big business.

Ocampo was apparently referring to a recent piece in the Asian Wall Street Journal, "the mouthpiece of American business," which criticized Ms Macapagal for taking back her offer of assistance to the US after she had been roundly criticized for offering it in the first place.

Not well thought out

Ocampo said the administration has been coming out with "public statements that had not been well thought out."

He urged the government to come out with a position on Iraq that is "within the context of its UN commitment" and more importantly, "anchored on the national interest."

He said the national interest "was not necessarily anchored on US interests," taking exception to the President's statement that Manila's support for the US was "in pursuit of its most vital interest."

In a separate interview, Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales said Manila should abide by the UN position to pressure Iraq into opening its doors to weapons inspectors. *With Blanche Rivera*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, September 19, 2002
24th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 1 Cor 15:1-11
Gospel: Lk 7:36-50

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to share his meal, so he went to the Pharisee's home and as usual reclined on the sofa to eat. And it happened that a woman of this town, who was known as a sinner, heard that he was in the Pharisee's house. She brought a precious jar of perfume and stood behind him at his feet, weeping. She wet his feet with tears, she dried them with her hair and kissed his feet and poured the perfume on them.

The Pharisee who had invited Jesus was watching and thought, "If this man were a prophet, he would know what sort of person is touching him; isn't this woman a sinner?"

Then Jesus spoke to the Pharisee and said, "Simon, I have something to ask you." He answered, "Speak, master." And Jesus said, "Two people were in debt to the same creditor. One owed him five hundred silver coins, and the other fifty. As they were unable to pay him back, he graciously canceled the debts of both. Now, which of them will love him more?"

Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, who was forgiven more." And Jesus said, "You are right." And turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? You gave me no water for my feet when I entered your house, but she has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You didn't welcome me with a kiss, but she has not stopped kissing my feet since she came in. You provided no oil for my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. This is why, I tell you, her sins, her many sins, are forgiven, because of her great love. But the one who is forgiven little, has little love."

Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven." The others sitting with him at the table began to wonder, "Now this man claims to forgive sins!" But Jesus again spoke to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Commentary

What one receives, that is what one gives. This is a basic principle in Christian living. The Gospel episode today demonstrates this. The woman sinner was very generous, having experienced Jesus' generosity in reinstating her in the human company. Simon the Pharisee could not be generous to Jesus because he could not read Jesus' generosity in accepting his invitation. Jesus consorted himself especially with the marginalized but clearly he had an open heart to all—manifest in letting himself become a guest of Simon the Pharisee. Though Luke does not mention Simon's intentions, it must have been to watch Jesus' actuations and find ways of having a case against him. See God's generosity in your life, so that you can be consequently generous to others.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CIVIL LAW (OBLIGATIONS AND CONTRACTS)—Fortuitous event; negligence—The often-invoked doctrine of "fortuitous event" or "*caso fortuito*" has become a convenient and easy defense to exculpate an obligor from liability. To constitute a fortuitous event, the following elements must concur: (a) the cause of the unforseen and unexpected occurrence or of the failure of the debtor to comply with obligations must be independent of human will; (b) it must be impossible to avoid; (c) the occurrence must be such as to render impossible for the debtor to fulfill obligations in a normal manner; and (d) the obligor must be free from any participation in the aggravation of the injury or loss. Article 1174 of the Civil Code states that no person shall be responsible for a fortuitous event that could not be foreseen or, though foreseen, was inevitable. In other words, there must be a exclusion of human intervention from the cause of injury or loss. A review of the records shoes that petitioner failed to exercise reasonable care and caution that an ordinarily prudent person would have used in the same situation. Petitioner failed to employ reasonable foresight, diligence and care that would have exempted it from liability resulting from the burning of the truck. negligence is that conduct that naturally or reasonably creates undue risk or harm to others. It may be a failure to observe that degree of care, precaution or vigilance that the circumstances justly demand; or to do any other act that would be done by a prudent and reasonable person, who is guided by considerations that ordinarily regulate the conduct of human affairs. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Panganiban, Third Division, Mindex Resources Development v. Morillo, G.R. No. 138123, March 12, 2002]

DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

MALAMPAYA 35

Case vs 38 Sino poachers filed

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The 38 Chinese fishermen arrested in Malampaya, Palawan, last week were charged with poaching and illegal fishing at the regional trial court here on Tuesday.

Confiscated from the 38 Chinese nationals on Sept. 12 were 1.8 tons of live fish, implements of blast fishing and poisoning like empty bottles of sodium cyanide solution and powder, homemade dynamites and black pellets suspected to be components of explosive.

All the confiscated fish were tested positive of cyanide.

The Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff released more than 40 live fish from the haul on Sept. 14.

The affidavit of Lt. Rodello Laraya and Ensign Pio Labaco of the Philippine Navy said Chinese in 15 sampans (small boats) of the two Chinese fishing vessels were actually fishing when intercepted by the Navy's PG 375. Navy men were on patrol at the Malampaya Natural Gas Project Exclusion Zone at the time.

According to Angelique Songco of Task Force Tubbataha, the two Chinese vessels have the same built and color as that of the Chinese vessel apprehended in Cagayancillo on May 12.

All three vessels are registered in Canton, China.

Also in Puerto Prinsesa, students and members of non-government and environmental organizations, and provincial and local government officials and employees headed by 2nd District Rep. Abraham Mitra and Gov. Joel Reyes staged a protest rally yesterday during the hearing of the various cases filed against 122 suspected Chinese poachers.

The protesters denounced the release of the suspects, allegedly at the behest of the national government moving to placate the Chinese government.

In related news, local non-government organizations expressed concern yesterday over the transfer of Lucio Ong from a Manila jail to the provincial jail on Sept. 12. Ong was allegedly responsible for the fast release of 62 suspected Chinese poachers onboard four vessels apprehended last year, Lucio Ong, whose real name is Xu Qing Jiang, was reportedly brought back to Palawan for arraignment.

But when lawyer Adelle Villena of PCSDS checked with the regional trial court, she found that no hearing or arraignment were scheduled for Ong. *Dominique Monera-Tabora, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

NO GRAFT ALLEGATION

DAR chief questions jurisdiction of PAGC

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

BRAGANZA

LAWYERS for Agrarian Reform Secretary Hernani Braganza questioned yesterday the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission's jurisdiction over a case filed by the DAR Employees Association (DAREA) against him in connection with the 14th anniversary celebration of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program two months ago that allegedly cost P50 million.

At yesterday's preliminary conference at the PAGC, Braganz's lawyers Arno Sanidad and Efren Dizon asserted that the commission essentially had no jurisdiction over the case "because there is no allegation of graft (against Braganza) in the entire complaint."

Dizon said it is the Commission on Audit and the Civil Service Commission that should answer the prejudicial questions of the case, such as matters on alleged fiscal mismanagement and union grievances.

Forum shopping

Braganza's lawyers also accused DAREA officials of forum shopping - seeking "friendly forums" such as the PAGC "that would entertain their complaint, after failing to get what they wanted through a grievance machinery."

"There is no allegation of graft in the entire complaint, not even one.

They have not cited any law . . . whether anti-graft, bribery or acquisition of property by a public official that Secretary Braganza has violated," Sanidad told reporters.

Sanidad noted that the relief being sought by DAREA in its complaint was not even addressed to the PAGC. He said DAREA was asking Congress to investigate its allegations.

"You look at the relief of the complaint, it does not ask the PAGC for relief. There is nothing there that is under the jurisdiction of the PAGC," he said.

But PAGC Chairman Dario Rama said the commission would resolve the jurisdiction issue raised by Braganza's lawyers at the same time as the main complaint.

The next hearing was set for Oct. 2. Rama said the case could be resolved within 30 days of that date.

"(If) we resolve (the jurisdiction issue) first, the case will be frozen and the (jurisdiction) issue will be used every time," he said. "We will resolve the jurisdiction issue together with the main case. Anyway, this will not last long."

Dario pointed out that the PAGC investigates violations of Republic Act 6713, or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees, among other laws. He said that since Braganza is a presidential appointee, the PAGC could investigate administrative charges against him.

"Until the highest court, the Supreme Court, tells us to stop, we will continue to do our job," Rama said.

Rasul, former ambassador, dies

FORMER Ambassador Abraham Rasul, husband of former Sen. Santanina T. Rasul, died yesterday morning at the National Kidney Institute in Quezon City.

Rasul was a former judge of Sulu and served as Ambassador to Saudi Arabia from 1989 to 1993. His remains lie at 155 Lopez Rizal St., Mandaluyong City until tomorrow and will be flown to Jolo, his hometown, on Saturday where internment will take place.

He is survived by former Senator Rasul, children Amina Zalmia and husband Romeo Bernardo; Fatimah Irene; Amroussi and wife Cecile Ann; Abraham Jr. and wife Maria Cecille; Yousuf and wife Emily; and Salma Pir Rasul.

Rasul was prime minister to Sultan Ismael Kiram who ceded sovereign rights over Sabah to the Philippine government under President Diosdado Macapagal. The ambassador was also a prime minister of Sultan, Muhakutah Kiram. He also succeeded his late father, Sen. Hadji Butu Abdul Bacqui, who was prime minister to the Sultans of Sulu.

Lebanese recruiter banned in RP

A LEBANESE recruitment agency has been banned in the Philippines after a Filipina migrant worker accused its owner of rape, Labor Secretary Patricia Santo Tomas said yesterday.

Labor officials recommended the blacklisting of the Lebanese Establishment for Trading and General Services after its owner allegedly raped a Filipina maid he hired, shortly after she arrived in Lebanon last year.

The woman has lodged a formal complaint against the suspect with the Philippine Embassy in Lebanon. The woman had initially dropped the charge in exchange for a return flight home, but pursued the complaint late last year. *AFP*

RP sailor in Oslo jail for 4 weeks for probe of accident

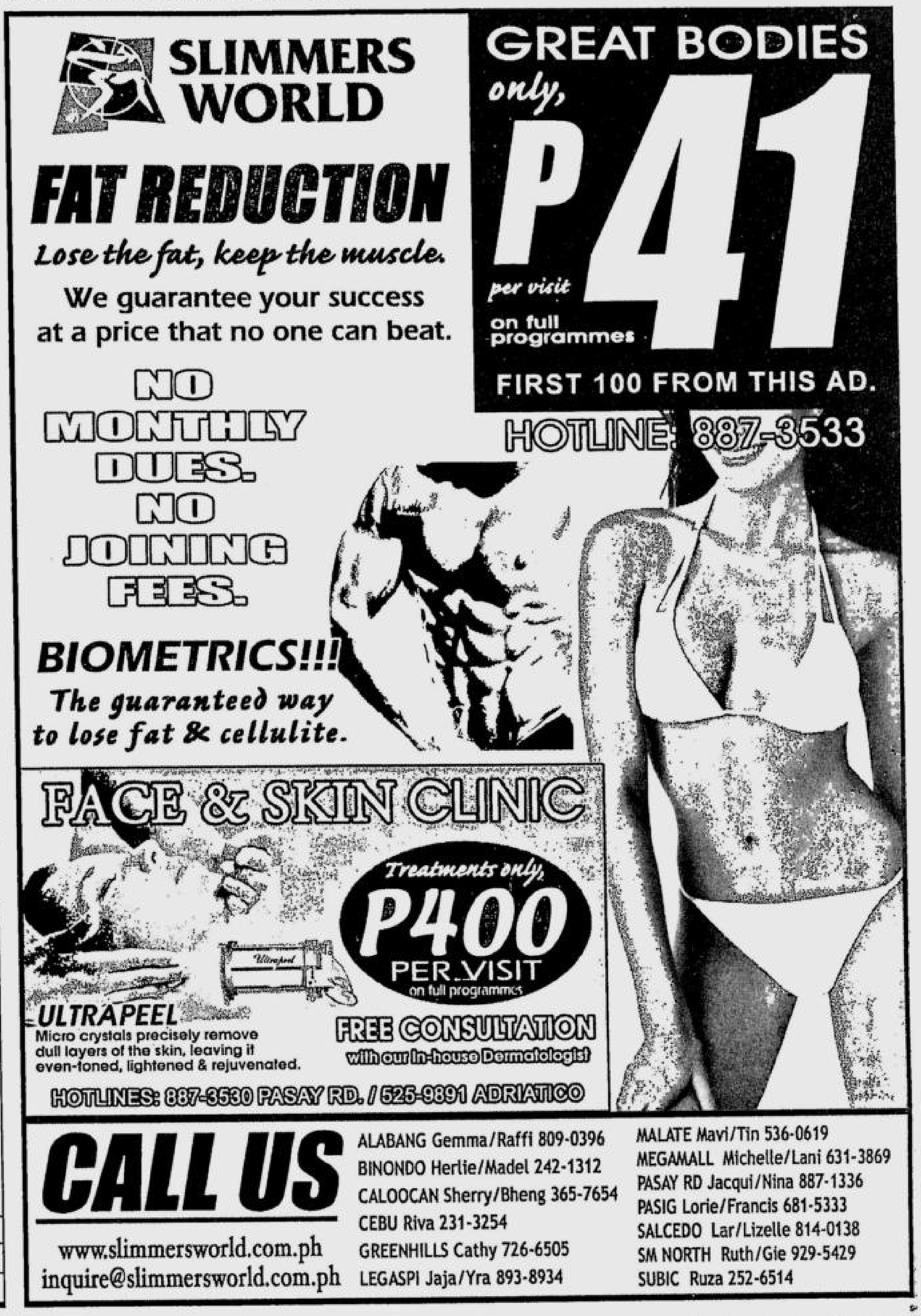
OSLO, Norway—The second mate of a Norwegian tanker that collided with a French fishing boat, killing four, was ordered held in a jail for four weeks on Tuesday pending a police investigation.

The Bow Eagle collided with the trawler Cistude, 120 kilometers (75 miles) off the western French coast of Brittany Aug. 25, and the Norwegian tanker failed to stop to help the stricken trawler.

The second mate, Ronnie L. Zape, 39, of the Philippines, was extradited to Norway from the Netherlands after he was held there pending a maritime inquiry and repairs to the Norwegian ship, which had a damaged bow.

Norway has jurisdiction in the case because the tanker was registered in the country and flies its flag.

Zape was in command on the bridge at the time of the collision, while the captain and the rest of the crew were off-duty.



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7 down; 14 KFR gangs to go

From page A1

complishment."

The ransom money was recovered intact.

Seven down

Apparently reckoning that the encounter had already "neutralized" the Mostrales-Patinio gang, the President summed up the government's performance against kidnap groups.

"Jun (Ebdane) has lost count but I'm counting," the President said. "He's gotten seven and there are 14 groups left (in the Philippine National Police order of battle)."

She had originally ordered PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. to wipe out all identified kidnap-for-ransom groups in one year. The timetable was recently shortened to six months.

President Macapagal noted that similar to the method used in handling the Ledesma kidnapping, a news blackout was observed while the case was ongoing.

"With media's cooperation, the solution time was just two days," Ms Macapagal said.

She was accompanied to the site by Cavite Gov. Ireneo Maliksi, who reportedly told her that while some kidnappers seek refuge in his province, "they don't get out alive."

The Mostrales-Patinio gang is said to be responsible for the kidnapping of Grace Ong on Oct. 20, 2001 in Ayala, Alabang; Jason Lim, Oct. 15, 2001, Sta. Cruz, Manila; Angela Vina Pineda, Nov. 12, 2001, Mandaluyong City, and Patricia Chung and Winena Jordan, Aug. 19, 2002.

The group is also said to be responsible for the killing of former Army Capt. Baron Cervantes, the self-proclaimed spokesperson of the Young Officers Union, in Las Piñas City on Dec. 31 last year.

The gang is partly named for another ex-Marine, Joseph Mostrales, who was earlier arrested in connection with the Cervantes murder case.

Joint work

The kidnappers were killed in an encounter with joint elements of the Cavite police and the PNP's anti-kidnapping unit, the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response, or Pacer.

The encounter came a day after the kidnappers released Jose Penano, whom they abducted only on Monday near the boundary of Carmona and Silang towns in Cavite. Penano is a businessman who was a former candidate for town mayor in the province.

Penano was released on Tuesday at the McDonald's branch in Tagaytay City after his family paid the P2-million ransom.

After the police tracked down the suspect's hideout, they launched the raid at about 4:30 a.m. yesterday, just as the suspects were about to leave.

Aside from the ransom, the police recovered three 9-mm pistols plus ammunition, one M-16 rifle, three mobile phones, two grenades and what looked like a list of prospective targets for kidnapping.

A rubout?

"(The three) were killed during a brief firefight that ensued after the gang members attempted to escape upon sensing the presence of the police operatives," said Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, PNP spokesperson.

But Mary "Rosebud" Ong, a former anti-narcotics agent who had testified against former PNP chief Panfilo Lacson's alleged links to organized crime before the Senate, voiced suspicions that the three were victims of a rubout.

"We believe they were killed to silence them. With their killing, we won't know who masterminded the killing of Cervantes. We believe the buck doesn't stop with Senior Supt. Rafael Cardeño," she told reporters.

Cardeño, who has gone absent without leave from the police service, had been tagged as the brains in Cervantes' slay by Mostrales, the confessed gunman. Cardeño has denied any hand in the crime.

Mostrales had also told police investigators that Radam, Patinio and Santos served as lookouts and rode in the back-up car when he shot Cervantes from behind in Las Piñas City last year.

Patinio had escaped with Marohombsar and Abdul Macaumbang from Camp Crame on June 19 this year. Marohombsar was killed in a shootout with the police and military on Aug. 25 in Cavite.

Bataoil, however, dismissed speculation that the three suspects were executed.

"It was a legitimate operation. The suspects fought it out with our operatives," he said.

The victim positively identified the slain suspects as his kidnappers, Bataoil added.

But even with the killing of the suspects, the PNP said the gang could not be considered neutralized. "I'm sure that there are still members who are still at large," Bataoil said. *With reports from AP, AFP*

ARSENAL of the kidnap gang seized in Barangay Manggahan, Gen. Trias, Cavite, after a shootout with police operatives.

ERIK ARAZAS

Cavite slays raise suspicions on Baron's case

By Christian Esguerra

THE father of Baron Cervantes aired his fear yesterday that the three other suspects in the New Year's Eve murder of his son might also be slain, following the killing of three alleged kidnappers in a firefight with police operatives early yesterday morning.

"I hope they would be protected," Roque Cervantes told the INQUIRER "If they die, I don't know where my son's case would lead to."

The father yesterday asked Philippine National Police chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane to ensure the safety of Joseph Mostrales, the confessed gunman, and suspects Jaime Centeno and Erlindo Torres. All three are detained at Camp Crame.

Mary "Rosebud" Ong, whose Witness Assistance Program provides help to Mostrales and his family, said yesterday's killing of Eugene Radam, 34, Rodolfo "Bullet" Patinio, 34, and, Diosdado "Dado" Santos, 39, was ."highly suspicious."

"Definitely, they were killed to shut their mouths," Ong told the INQUIRER. "They were killed so we'll never know the real brains behind the killing of Cervantes."

Mostrales had tagged Radam, Patinio, and Santos as among the seven-man team supposedly hired by Supt. Rafael Cardeño to liquidate Cervantes. Cardeño, who has denied any involvement, remains at large.

The three suspects were allegedly tasked to case the house of Cervantes in Las Piñas hours before he was gunned down infront of a nearby. convenience store on Dec. 31 last year.

Police claimed Radam and his group were killed at dawn yesterday following a brief gunfight with members of the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response (Pacer) and the Cavite Provincial Police Office at the suspects' hideout in Barangay Manggahan in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Roque Cervantes had earlier complained that his family knew about Patinio's arrest only after he had escaped.

A source said police recaptured Patinio after Marohombsar was killed in a supposed gun battle in Magallanes, Cavite, last Aug. 25. He was allegedly brought back to Camp Crame.

"Bullet may have been made to escape with Marohombsar to act as a human tracker," the source said.

"Since Faisal could not be liquidated while in jail, he had to be made to escape but there should also be an assurance that he would still be traced. This explains Bullet's escape."

PNP says int'l kidnap . . .

From page A1

who are supposed to kidnap the Korean arrived just the same day—in the morning or probably in the afternoon—and already in the evening, they (went) and tried to kidnap the target," he said.

Velasco said his men were able to rescue the victim, who was beaten up by his abductors.

One of the suspects was arrested with the help of the immigration bureau and the justice department, according to Velasco. He did not give other details.

A Singaporean was also kidnapped by his fellow countrymen a year ago and later released, he said.

Velasco said the NCRPO was also working closely with foreign embassies to identify these kidnappers, who would demand huge ransom from the families or friends of the victims in their homeland.

Police are looking into possible links between these foreign kidnappers and rogue employees of the immigration bureau, he added.

"We are monitoring closely these groups and we are intensifying our operations against them to prevent them from abducting more victims," Velasco said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has given the police one year to subdue 21 identified kidnap gangs, saying their activities have driven away foreign investors—and attracted foreign kidnappers instead. *Reports by AFP and Alcuin Papa.*

'Tried and tested formula': What's that?

From page A0

ever, Lacson said he could not believe that the kidnappers let the victims go "out of the goodness of their hearts."

"*Namuhunan na sila* (The kidnappers had already invested a lot)," he said. He pointed out that the main "investment" the criminals made was to put their lives at stake ("*nagtaya ng buhay*") when they executed the kidnapping in daylight.

But Lacson said he had no definite information about the kidnap gang behind the Ledesma abduction. He noted, however, that the brazen use of high-powered firearms reminded him of the modus operandi of the Bacullo gang--one of the top two kidnap-for-ransom gangs in the PNP order of battle. The National Capital Region Police Office has said it was still validating information on the kidnap gang that abducted the Ledesma children.

Lacson pointed out that the relatively short lapse of time between abduction and release was to be expected, precisely because the brazenness of the crime put too much "heat" on the gang. This likely meant the Ledesma children were released for a substantially lower amount than reported in the media.

Political fence

The outcry for an explanation came from all sides of the political fence--and even from outside Congress. In Naga City, ex-Senator and former Education Secretary Raul Roco said he was suspicious about the whole incident, echoing the view of militant groups who claimed that the incident seemed to be "scripted."

In the Senate, Flavier said the unexplained formula prompted people to suspect that money changed hands.

"It should be shared with us because there are gray areas."

A family friend, Rep. Apolinario Lozada, pleaded with Ledesma to "clarify" his "tried and tested" statement.

House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla said the formula must be a euphemism for ransom payments. "How else could it (the release) have happened? Will those kidnappers do it for nothing? Will they risk their lives for the love of Assunta (de Rossi, Ledesma's actress-fiancee)?"

If Ledesma denies ransom was paid, "then we should subject him to a congressional inquiry to see the meaning of this tried and tested formula so that it can be institutionalized," Padilla said.

Other congressmen said they were happy Christina Julieta Ledesma, 10, and Julio Carlos, 5 were released unharmed, but said much needed to be explained.

Muntinlupa Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon said he wanted authorities to reveal more details about the "tried and tested" TnT formula "in the interest of the public." Assistant Minority Leader Gilbert Remulla said he had suspicions that ransom was paid.

Akbayan party-list Rep. Etta Rosales lauded the media for not sensationalizing the kidnapping but said the case "showed the gravity of the (kidnap-for-ransom) problem in the country."

"The problem is far from over," Rosales said in a phone interview.

Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles said the case should not end with the release of the children. "Now it's time to find the kidnappers. We should show them no mercy," Nograles said.

Sen. Ralph Recto said the Ledesma kidnapping opened the door for kidnap-for-ransom groups to prey on political families.

"It is very alarming, especially the manner how the kids were abducted—very professional. Especially (because) there are reports that retired police officers were involved," Recto said.

Flavier said legislators were taking extra precautions to ensure their safety and those of their families.

At present, one or two police officers are assigned by the PNP to each senator.

Flavier said he did not believe senators needed additional PNP escorts, except on certain cases.

"I don't believe in adding more security (personnel) because it would be an added burden to the government. But I believe in being careful," he said.

In private

Only Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. suggested that the formula be shared with senators in private.

"They (senators) should keep it among themselves because if you tell it publicly, it might no longer be effective," Pimentel said.

NCRPO chief Deputy Director Gen. Reynaldo Velasco told the INQUIRER they had yet to identify the group that staged the abduction. But Velasco did reveal that the group was one of the 16 KFR groups that have yet to be neutralized by the PNP.

"We are still validating raw info from our debriefing of the units that operated on the kidnapping. But we have yet to identify any one group that is responsible," Velasco said.

Roco, who arrived in Naga yesterday to attend the regional fiesta of Bicol, the Penafrancia Festival, said in a morning radio interview that if Ledesma did pay ransom with the knowledge of Malacañang, the government's "no ransom policy" was violated.

Roco also took a shot at President Macapagal-Arroyo, saying she shouldn't claim so-called achievements in the fight against crime because it debases the Office of the President.

He said the task properly belonged to the PNP chief. *With reports from John Nery, Alcuin Papa, Juliet Javellana; and Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Rep. Jules Ledesma is interviewed after his two children were released by their abductors at Makati Medical Center early Tuesday morning. Looking on is Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay

RANDY HORMILLOSA

James Bond would feel . . .

From page A1

Two US entrepreneurs bought one of the Atlas-F missile silos built by the government near Lake Placid, New York, in the 1950s and then quickly abandoned.

They built a house above ground, and refurbished the rooms underground to create for a (rich) buyer his/her very own "weapon against growing world terrorism."

"Imagine having your own private James Bond 007 secret lair... From the surface, the home looks ordinary and fitting. But down below the ground lies a home in place of a Missile Launch Control Center," reads the advertisement on the Internet auction site e-Bay.

The control center in the silo below has steel reinforced walls, with "Star Wars like doors." The 14-floor silo is, for the moment, empty.

FAQ

On its own Internet site (www.silohome.com), the first question on the "Frequently asked questions" page is: "Does Russia still have this site as a target?"

The answer: "NO. This Atlas-F series was finished before the SALT (arms control treaty). The Russians knew this site was already obsolete and decommissioned."

The sellers who are buyers say, "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for you to purchase one of the most secure residential properties in the United States today."

"With the escalating threat of world terrorism and an increasing need for security, this is the perfect solution for the right family or corporation." The house is located in the town of Saranac, 530 kilometers from New York City. The closest town is called Russia.

The property also features five wooded hectares and a private landing strip.

"We took the end result of $18 million in government wasted spending (315 million in today's dollars) and turned it into a rare and unique private airport mountain getaway," they said.

Buyers can bid on the property on e-Bay until Sept. 25. So far no offers have been made. *AFP*

Another Chavit aide links Jinggoy to 'jueteng' payoff

By Volt Contreras

ANOTHER staff member of state witness Luis "Chavit" Singson yesterday testified at the Estrada corruption trial that he also picked up alleged jueteng protection money "in the presence" of then San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada.

Jamis Singson, who said he was not related to his employer, was the fourth employee of the former Ilocos Sur governor to corroborate Singson's testimonies pinning deposed president Joseph Estrada and his co-assused son to illegal gambling payoffs.

Jamis, 28, said he was handed a plastic shopping bag containing payoff money inside Jinggoy's office at the San Juan municipal hall one afternoon in October 1999.

He said the bag was given to him by one of the mayor's security aides named Nestor. He added Jinggoy was only "five to six meters away."

Shortly after, he said, he again picked up a bag of money from Jinggoy's residence in North Greenhills, San Juan.

And again, it was Nestor who took out the cash from the mayor's vehicle before giving it to him, he said. Jinggoy, he was told, was taking a bath at the time.

During cross-examination, Jamis said he and Singson were frequent visitors to Jinggoy's office because the governor and the mayor often played "pusoy" or Russian poker inside.

Like the witness before him, Singson's bodyguard SPO2 Vicente Amistad, Jamis said he was just following orders from the governor when he served as a mule of jueteng money.

He said he did not know the exact amount he got from Jinggoy at the time. He also was not aware then that the bags of cash were meant for then President Estrada.

JINGGOY ESTRADA

Jamis said he, like Amistad, also fetched jueteng money from the house of suspected gambling kingpin Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, but added the bundles of cash were actually handed over by Pineda's brother, Romy.

He said he and another police-bodyguard of the governor, SPO2 Federico Artates, got about P5 million sometime in early 1999 from the Pineda residence. Artates actually took the money while Jamis stayed in the vehicle.

It was then, he added, that Singson instructed them to bring the money to his co-employee Emma Lim, who then joined them in their vehicle to "bring the money to Malacañang."

"We dropped her off at Malacañang, and then waited outside. When she returned, she said she had given the money to President Estrada," Jamis recounted when cross examined by Estrada counsel Prospero Crescini.

Later in July or August 1999, Jamis said, he again got money from Pineda's residence. That time, he said, he was the one who personally received around P7 million. He was made to sign a "bluebook" as proof of receipt by Romy Pineda. Bong Pineda was present during the exchange, he added.

Jamis also said William Ang, brother of co-accused Charlie "Atong" Ang, helped in withdrawing money from a bank which was later delivered by Ang and Singson to Estrada's residence on Polk Street, North Greenhills.

The money he was referring to was apparently a part of the P130-million tobacco excise tax allegedly pocketed by Estrada.

Jamis said he, Artates, and Singson's driver Faustino Prudencio, accompanied William Ang to Westmont Bank, Shaw Boulevard, upon instructions from the governor in August 1998.

William entered the bank by himself, he said. And when he got out later, he was flanked by one Jojo Uy and two security guards, each carrying "two boxes."

In an interview, senior state prosecutor Alexander Padilla said Jojo Uy was no other than Eleuterio Tan, one of the co-accused who remains at large.

The party then proceeded to the house of Ang's mother in Mandaluyong, with an armored van from the bank tailing them to provide security, he said.

After eating at the house, Jamis said, Singson told them to get ready as they were to escort him and Ang to Polk Street. Singson and Ang had their own vehicle, while Jamis, Artates, and Prudencio used another, he said.

Petron hikes LPG price by P1 per kilo

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PETRON Corp. yesterday announced a further increase in the price of liquefied petroleum, or cooking, gas by a P1 per kilogram effective midnight last night.

This means the price of LPG in an 11-kg cylinder will go up by P11, bringing Gasul retail prices to the P256 to P271 range.

Virginia Ruivivar, Petron corporate communications manager, said in a statement the adjustment was based on an increase of P1.58 per kilogram in international contract prices this month.

Ruivivar said LPG contract prices had been going up since March, trailing increases in crude prices.

She said demand for heating fuel in Western countries at the onset of the winter months were pushing LPG prices up.

"Like the last increase we implemented for our LPG price, this one is lower by more than 50 centavos compared to the increase in international contract prices," Ruivivar said.

Petron increased its LPG prices last Aug. 24 by 80 centavos per kilo when industry data show that international prices went up by P1.50 per kilo.

"We are doing our best to cushion the impact of higher fuel costs on the local market," the Petron official said.

She noted that the impact of changes in global prices was immediately felt here, as half of the country's LPG needs were being imported.

Petron said that based on indications from traders, there was a strong possibility of further increases in contract prices next month.

Roberto Kanapi, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.'s general manager for external affairs, said in a telephone interview the firm had yet to decide on the matter.

But Kanapi said price increases were inevitable, considering that LPG contract prices went up by $28.50 per metric ton this month.

He said contract prices in August stood at $228 per ton as against $256.50 in September.

"Over the last five months, contract prices have gone up by a total of $62 per ton," Kanapi added.

He also noted that this month's price increase was only the second since February 2001.

Cavite traders talk globalization

THE CAVITE Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) will discuss this afternoon "The Impact of Globalization and Environmental Laws" at The Island Cove Resort in Kawit, Cavite.

The guest speaker, Sergio Luis Ortiz Jr., president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc., is expected to focus his talk on the impact of globalization on the Philippine economy. CCCI President Boy Aure organized the symposium in response to the concerns of investors and businessmen who are reeling from the impact of globalization. The symposium aims to address the specific concerns of investors and businessmen who are fighting to save their businesses. Businessmen also have to deal with stringent environmental laws and costly requirements that could "break the camel's back."

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PROCLAMATION NO. 262

DECLARING THE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 16 TO 20, 2002, AS "PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT WEEK"

WHEREAS, the Production Management Association of the Philippines (PROMAP), a non-partisan and non-stock organization was established to promote industrial development through better and more efficient management of the production systems.

WHEREAS, PROMAP will be holding the 15th National Convention to be held at the Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel, Roxas Blvd. Pasay City on September 19 to 20, 2002, with the theme "Shifting Gears-Production Moves in Challenging Times",

WHEREAS, there is a need to focus national attention on the important role production executives play in the development of the economy as well as in the manufacturing sector,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby declare the period from September 16 to 20, 2002 as "Production Management Week" under the auspices of the Production Management Association of the Philippines.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Republic of the Philippines to be affixed.

Done in the City of Manila this 5th day of September, in the year of our Lord, two thousand and two.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President of the Philippines

By the president
(Sgd.) Alberto G. Romulo
Executive Secretary

MESSAGE FROM THE PROMAP PRESIDENT

My best wishes to everyone.

Our National Convention this month culminates the various programs carried out this year in pursuit of our vision. This year's convention is truly significant as it coincides with the celebration of PROMAP's 25th anniversary. We hope to surpass last year's convention, independently assessed as one of the best benchmarked against the offerings of other organizations far more mature than PROMAP.

The convention theme this year is simply expressed as "Shifting Gears: Production Moves in Challenging Times". We have invited speakers who will share their wealth of experience and expertise from where participants can draw insights in formulating and implementing their companies' competitive strategies.

We are proud of our first graduates of the Production Management Development Program. Held at the University of the Philippines, the PMDP is one of the most intensive and prestigious courses in Operations Management. After our grand induction at Edsa Shangri-La Hotel with Sec. Mar Roxas keynoting the occasion, we had three well-attended General Membership Meetings. Industry experts covered the topics "How Fast is Fast", "Managing People in the 21st Century" and "Theory of Constraints". Two special seminars were conducted. First, "Inventory Reduction Workshop" with ESI Systems Inc. at Edsa Shangri-La Hotel. Another was at Subic covering Leadership and Variability Reduction and Control.

We remain an active participant in the government's planning for the Medium Term National Action Agenda for Productivity chaired by NEDA Secretary Dante Canlas. Next month PROMAP will take the lead with other quality and productivity organizations to celebrate the National Productivity Month with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

We also welcome the birth of PROMAP Foundation Inc., the elite association of past and incumbent PROMAP presidents to compliment PROMAP. A successful golf fund-raising tournament was jointly undertaken last month at Tat Filipinas.

To complete the year, we are scheduling a relevant seminar on Risk Management and Control and the second running of the PMDP. We will also be busy enticing more companies to join PROMAP. Soon, we will complete the criteria for the "Manufacturing Excellence of the Year" and the "Production Executive of the Year" awards. Lastly, we still have our Christmas party and election of the new set of officers for next year come December.

In behalf of this year's Board, thank you for all your support and to this year's convention committee. My gratitude to General Milling Corp. for graciously supporting all our programs. This year will always be a memorable experience for all of us.

Romeo P. Sangalang

PROMAP 1977

The Production Management Association of the Philippines
Celebrating 25 years of excellence in Production Management

will hold its 15th Annual National Convention at the Westin Philippine Plaza on the 19th and 20th of September, 2002. The event will cap the year long celebration of PROMAP's silver anniversary in the field of manufacturing management.

SHIFTING GEARS
PRODUCTION MOVES IN CHALLENGING TIMES

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Cultivating a Culture of Personal Excellence

Leonardo M. Berba (United Laboratories)
Balanced Scorecard Approach to Manufacturing

Roland S. Quilala (National Power Corporation)
Best Practices in the NAPOCOR

Josephus B. Jimenez (Pepsi Cola Products Philippines Inc.)
Managing People in the New Millennium

Ramon Salazar (Intel Philippines)
Lean Manufacturing

Bernardo M. Villegas (University of Asia & the Pacific)
Philippine Manufacturing Outlook

Rene T. Domingo (Asian Institute of Management)
World Class Manufacturing

Francisco J. Bernardo III (JAD Group of Companies)
Outsourcing as a Source for Global Competitiveness

Jacob A Peña (Sydenham Laboratories)
Panel Discussion

Virgilio Fulgencio (Department of Trade and Industry)
Panel Discussion

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INQUIRER

Vol. 17 No. 283
ISSN
0116-2642

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 /
528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

•100% soy ink•

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EDITORIALS

Fresh kill

THERE'S a new batch of corpses that President Macapagal-Arroyo is declaring as a "big accomplishment." As is her wont, in keeping with her strong-republic script, she traveled to Cavite to view the end of the road for the three supposed kidnappers and sing paeans to her law enforcers. Mercifully, she desisted from posing beside the bodies—an act that she has performed at least twice, the most recent with the slain Pentagon chief Faisal Marohombsar who was trundled into her presence on a wooden cart festooned with fresh banana leaves.

With yesterday's kill in General Trias, Cavite, the President announced that seven of the 21 kidnap-for-ransom gangs identified by her administration had been neutralized. That should be a comforting thought in this kidnapping-plagued neck of the woods where no one—not a lawmaker's children, not a gasoline boy—is safe. But it's next to impossible for attentive observers to keep track as to who have been summarily dispatched to the afterlife and who are still plying their trade, or whether, in the lacuna between identification and extermination, some new syndicate or other has materialized or diversified from other felonious pursuits to cash in on victimized families' anguish and desperation. And with suspects (who can reasonably be expected to talk about alliances and connections) swiftly turned into corpses (that tell no tales), we are left to take the authorities' word for it.

Far be it from us to say that this administration is lying through its teeth. But the fact is that despite what it says, and despite the blood and gore served up as "accomplishments" by the tough-talking and -posing President, daily occurrences show kidnapping as an ever growing menace hitting points north and south and in between. These days, you don't have to flaunt your wealth in the wild and woolly South to catch the fancy of Robot wannabes looking to negotiate with the likes of Robert Aventajado. You could just be taking in the sights at less than posh Pagsanjan and you'd have thugs on your tail, spiriting you away and demanding that you cough up cash and mobile phones. Indeed, like the shabu trade, like robberies, burglaries and holdup incidents, kidnapping has become a regular cottage industry.

Worse, the perpetrators operate with an impunity so in-your-face one cannot but conclude that they are, or are protected by, current or former members of the police and/or military. Who, for one thing, would have high-powered firearms such as those used to pull off the abduction of Negros Occidental Rep. Jules Ledesma's children? And who, after all, would challenge the powers that be but those in power themselves?

Word play

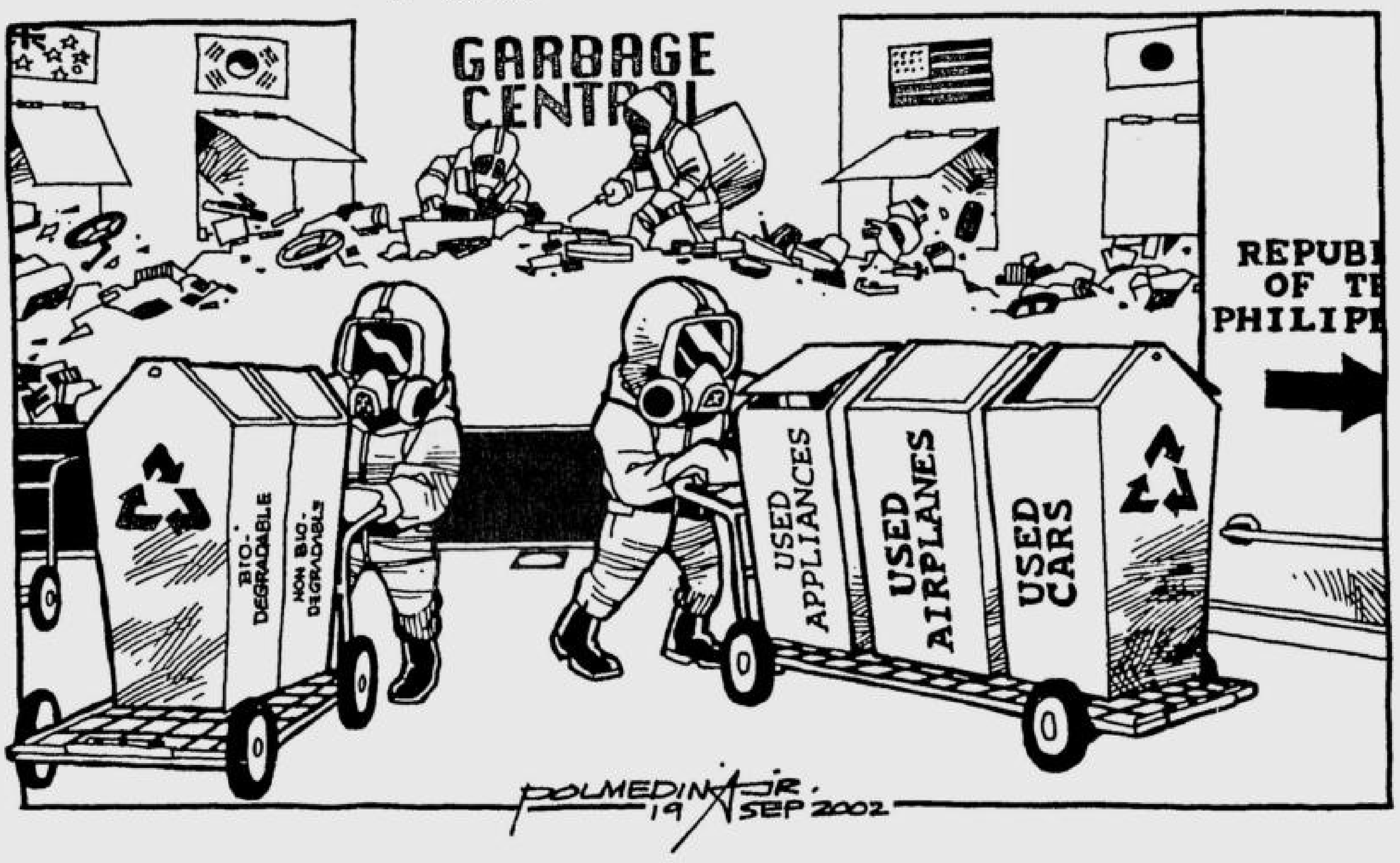
THE "TRIED and tested formula" that Representative Ledesma harped on in the course of parrying reporters' questions on the release of his children has become such a source of curiosity that he's sure to be hounded about it. Particularly because the kidnappers remain at large, it's but logical for a public grown cynical vis-à-vis official terms—"strong republic," for a glaring example—will equate the mysterious formula with the payment of ransom.

This is the problem with making word play in these days of fear and rage, when the government is hard put to maintain a credible stance of stability and transparency and its constituents are left to fend for themselves—and find the answers. In the flurry of responding to reporters' questions and taking care not to admit to violating the no-ransom policy of the government, of which he is a part, Ledesma was caught in a position no anguished parent should be: between a rock and a hard place.

This is not to display insensitivity toward Ledesma, no matter that the very visibility that he has lately, strangely, sought can be theorized as the cause of his family's harrowing experience. This is merely to point out that government officials and the statements they make, make the news.

In this context, the administration's appeal for the media not to report on "live" kidnapping cases is absurd. It is not the press that is raking a neighborhood with automatic fire and making off with children. Asking the media to not report that, for example, a lawmaker's children have been kidnapped in broad daylight is asking the media to suspend their duty to inform the public that the anti-kidnapping campaign is not making headway.

If the administration wants anyone to shut up, its officials—police, military, etc.—are it.



Trouble among Munti teachers greets DECS chief

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

NOW that Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus has returned from his travels and formally assumed office, one of the first things he should pay attention to is the long simmering conflict between the teachers of Muntinlupa City and their division superintendent.

The teachers have filed a number of charges against the superintendent, Alma Bella Bautista. The charges were filed with the Office of the Ombudsman on Sept. 13, 2001. Its first anniversary has already come and gone but the case has not moved in the Ombudsman and the teachers are restless. Acting Ombudsman Amado Gervacio wants to be appointed to a full term, but how will the appointing power look with favor on his wish when cases are moving very slowly in his office? And De Jesus may be greeted by demonstrations and pickets like what has happened in other government offices.

The charges against Bautista are serious: graft and corruption, malversation of public funds, falsification of public documents, abuse of authority and grave misconduct. The complainants are represented by Consuelo H. Velasco, public schools district supervisor; Rosita A. Espina, principal of the Bayanan Elementary School; Teodora A. Diang, president of the Muntinlupa Federation of Elementary and Secondary Teachers; and Eustaquio F. Escario, president of the Muntinlupa Elementary School Teachers Association.

According to official records at the Office of the Ombudsman, Bautista was accused of graft and corruption, falsification and malversation for the following reasons:

1. On Dec. 27, 1999, Bautista requested for P135,000 from the Special Education Fund (SEF) for an alleged spiritual renewal and recollection for division officials and personnel in Tagaytay City on May 10-12, 2000. The amount was released to her but no such event took place.

The Commission on Audit disallowed the cash disbursement. In a letter to the Muntinlupa City auditor, Bautista, according to the complaint, "concocted another justification...This time, she claimed she used the said amount for activities such as 'Pasyal-Dasal' in Quezon on May 14-15, 2000; 'Spiritual Retreat and Planning Workshop for Division Supervisors and Guidance Counselors' at the Gabriel Resort in Pangil, Laguna on May 31-June 1, 2000; and a seminar for the Muntinlupa Non-Teaching Personnel (Muntepas) at Doña Jovita Resort, Los Baños, Laguna, which was admittedly a spiritual retreat, on May 18-19, 2000."

The COA still disallowed the disbursement because the nature and purpose for the cash advance from the SEP were not among those enumerated under the Local Government Code.

2. In another instance, according to the complaint, Bautista "requested and was granted a cash advance of P80,750 supposedly for the 'Planning Workshop and Observation Tour of Women's Health Promotion Program' in the Ilocos Region for school nurses and selected division office personnel on Nov. 17-19, 2000. In the liquidation report, she made it appear that the participants stayed at Parto's ancestral residence in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, for three days at a cost of P230 per head, or a total of P23,460.

"This is false. According to the nurses-participants, they did not use this place. During the first night, they slept at the Regional Learning Center in Tarlac. The next night, they slept in a public school building in Ilocos. In short, there was a clear misrepresentation and misuse of public funds."

3. "For the period covering February to October 1999, the City Government of Muntinlupa advanced the salaries of national employees of the Pedro Diaz High School at Alabang, Muntinlupa City. Up to now, the said amount had remained unpaid by the DECS-Muntinlupa under Dr. Alma Bella Bautista...The amount remained unrefunded despite the fact that the fund for this purpose has long been remitted by the National Government to DECS-Muntinlupa."

There are many other charges but these three are the most serious. I will not mention the others to make this column short.

In her defense, Bautista filed a counter-affidavit denying all the allegations. She said the activities really took place and that her appeal on the disallowance has not yet been decided by the COA. Moreover, out of the P135,000, only P69,314.40 was spent and the balance of P65,685.60 was already returned.

On the liquidation report on the nurses' health workshop in the Ilocos, Bautista said that while the cash advance was in her name, she did not personally handle the activity as she was on leave at the time. She assigned the activity to her subordinate who prepared the liquidation report.

While she signed the report, she said she had no participation in the alleged misrepresentation nor was she the one who prepared the "falsified receipt."

On the charge that she failed to refund the P1,959,129.62 advanced by the city government for the salaries of employees of the Pedro Diaz High School, Bautista said this issue has now become moot and academic. The full amount has already been refunded.

Never again?

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I USED to say over the past several years, each time people raised the possibility of martial law being imposed again, that I just couldn't see how it could be done. My reason for this was that two of the conditions which allowed Ferdinand Marcos to declare it on Sept. 21, 1972 were not there.

One was the willingness of the citizens to tolerate it. Martial law was an unknown quantity in 1972, and a nation that was, as everyone said, spectacularly riven into rich and poor, or one that sat on a "social volcano," was willing enough to try it. "Elite democracy," as scholars and activists called the political system that emerged from the loins of American colonialism, hadn't worked. Maybe a system that was more in keeping with our "latent Asian personality," one oriented toward discipline, was what the doctor ordered.

Our experience with martial law changed all that. We learned that authoritarian rule in general was worse than the disease it meant to cure. The concept that bread was preferable to freedom for the hungry was a spurious one. You had no freedom, you had no claim to bread. The fellow who had the bread could give it to you or not, and you could do nothing about it. Martial law in fact gave neither. It robbed the people of their freedom without giving them bread. We fell under the sway of the bayonet, and became all the more impoverished for it. We're still reeling from the plunder to this day. "Edsa" or "people power" assured we would always say, "Never again."

The other factor was America's willingness to support it. This was the time of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, and America had turned a new leaf in foreign policy, one that was openly supportive of tyrants in the Third World. Elsewhere in the continent, Nixon and Kissinger would engineer the ouster and murder of Salvador Allende because he wasn't friendly to America. (Even if he was friendly to Americans, Chile being a haven for American students, many of whom adopted leftist views after being exposed to grinding poverty.) In the Philippines, they supported Marcos. Quite unabashedly too: they were among the first to recognize his government, not least because it ensured unopposed Philippine support for America's war in Vietnam.

By the latter half of the 1980s, however, America realized the folly of that tack, helped in no small way by the spread of Marxist guerrilla movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America. It withdrew support from the tyrants, whose hold on power had in any case become tenuous over the years. One of them was Marcos. Just as they had been there when he declared martial law, the Americans were there when Cory Aquino rose to oust him. Or the liberals in the State Department were, the conservatives arguing to the end that Marcos was part of the solution even as he was the source of the problem.

I used to say this throughout Fidel Ramos' term and in the short-lived one of Joseph Estrada. I am not so sure this is the case today. I do not know that martial law can be imposed again in the form that Marcos gave it to us. I imagine it cannot. Our mania for elections, shown in the resolute campaigning Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her potential rivals are carrying out this early in the day, must certainly suggest so. But that is cold comfort when you realize that you can always have the essence of martial law, namely the curtailment of the most basic freedoms, even without martial law. That, quite chillingly, has become a real prospect in our horizon today.

The two important conditions Marcos had for declaring martial law, and the two conditions that disappeared in subsequent years, are back.

Both "Edsas," brilliant and inspired acts of people power, have betrayed expectations. They were brief moments of euphoria followed by long periods of frustration. "Edsa II" in particular has proven to be an exercise in futility. There is little left in GMA's government to remind us of it. Nothing shows that more dramatically than that two of its pillars, Teofisto Guingona and Raul Roco, are gone, and in their place we see Blas Ople and Mike Velarde. Added to this, the explosion that was the so-called "Edsa III" suggested not just that the boiling magma had leaped up to the throat of the social volcano but that the desperate were willing to try out desperate measures again.

Equally importantly, if not more so, the United States is willing to support if not downright tyrants at least tyrannical rule in countries such as ours. In lieu of Nixon and Kissinger, we have George Bush and Donald Rumsfeld. And in lieu of the Vietnam War, there is their "war against terror." There is no reason to suppose the latter characters are a more benign version of the former. As several Pakistani journalists told me recently, what could be more ironic than that the United States would attack Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein and attack everyone to foist Pervez Musharraf on them. At least, one of them pointed out, Marcos was elected for a couple of terms before he became a dictator. Musharraf was a dictator from the start, and the United States turned a blind eye to his massive cheating in the recent polls.

Look at what's happened in Basilan, where Wahab Akbar has become God's or Allah's appointed to lead the crusade against evil. Look at the ferocious discovery, courtesy of the "war against terror," of the presumed virtues of the people who along with Marcos were responsible for dragging this country to the gutter: the generals. Look at the slow chipping away at this country's civil and human rights in the name of fighting criminality and terror, whichever comes first, or conveniently.

Look at these, and ask yourself: Can we really say with certainty, "Never again"?

Gov't big loser in Piatco arbitration

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

PEOPLE who are criticizing the President and four Cabinet members for having posed a la "Men in Black" apparently have lost their sense of humor, which is so necessary in going through life, whether public or private. In the first place, the MIB are the good guys fighting the bad aliens, not gangsters, as is being alleged. If the top officials want to adopt this symbol, it's understandable. I personally found that photo quite riveting and not at all offensive. As ace photojournalist Mandy Navasero has pointed out, it was technically quite good.

* * *

I agree with Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman that our officials are entitled to liven things up once in a while to lessen the tension. At least let's be thankful that the way they are putting some excitement into their lives now is quite harmless, compared to how they used to do it in the previous administration.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said the photo was "demeaning of the presidency." He ought to look up the meaning of that term again. What's that photo shot compared to the nights of drunken sprees and bacchanalian revelry in the Palace during the past regime when, as former Erap chief of staff Prod Laquian noted, the boss frequently didn't know who pushed which paper under his nose. What was demeaning was the rivalry among the presidential mistresses for diamond necklaces, mansions, bank accounts, etc.

* * *

Since my recent visit to Puerto Princesa, during which I saw the city gearing up for a recall election against Mayor Dennis Socrates, I have been reading up on the history of recall elections. I have noted that during the recall case against Bataan Gov. Enrique Garcia, the Supreme Court was very strict about the need to ensure that each and every member of the Preparatory Recall Assembly (PRA) is notified about the meeting to vote on the recall initiative. The Court stressed that to the extent that the PRA members (in the recall case against Socrates these are the barangay chairmen and sangguniang barangay members in Puerto Princesa) are not notified of the meeting, "to that extent is the sovereign voice of the people they represent nullified." Because of the failure to notify the PRA members properly, the Court ordered that another meeting be convened.

In the Puerto Princesa case, the Socrates camp has protested that many PRA members were not notified. It has affidavits signed by 130 members who were never notified, and 18 members who got the notice four days after the assembly. It also appears that many signatures are spurious. The Court should give Socrates' complaint due course.

* * *

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel has advised the Senate blue ribbon committee to "proceed with caution" on the controversial Piatco contract and "consider the impact of its decision on the investment climate in the country." He also opined that if if the Naia Terminal 3 is virtually finished, "the issue of fair play, the stability of contracts entered into by private parties and the matter of leveling the playing field among investors, both local and foreign, intrude into the controversy."

Pimentel's advice is timely. The adversarial manner in which the administration, represented by Presidential Adviser Gloria Tan Climaco, and the senators came down on Piatco, treating its Chinese-Filipino investors like criminals instead of partners in development, must have a chilling effect on potential investors. More so on the Chinese-Filipino businessmen, since Piatco president Cheng Yong is vice president of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Who would want to invest in BOT contracts here? Who would want to buy into Transco?

* * *

As lawyers like to point out, in every contract there is always something wrong to be found; there is no such thing as a "perfect" contract. But the problem was that the administration, through Climaco, chose to blow up the so-called onerous provisions and violations, instead of quietly renegotiating them. Because the harassment came at the time when the airport was practically finished, the perception that the government is destroying Piatco so that it could give the airport concession to another party will not die down.

* * *

But this may not be the end of the problem. Star columnist Dick Pascual recently speculated whether the Chengs are about to give up or going down fighting. At the Senate hearings, the media picked up signals that the Chengs, after having been humiliated, prefer to fight to the end. Reports say that if they feel they are getting a raw deal, they would resort to arbitration. As stipulated in the contract, this will be done in Singapore under the rules of the International Chamber of Commerce. If this happens, the Piatco case will subject RP to adverse international publicity again, and the international business community may not be sympathetic to the government. After all, wasn't it supposed to have checked on Piatco's compliance every step of the way, from the time the contract was awarded during the Ramos era? If the government failed to do its job, it must have been because officials were bribed to look the other way. It is to the government's advantage not to let the Piatco case go into arbitration.

* * *

The administration is determined to open Terminal 3 because of the "Visit The Philippines" tourism campaign next year. But the way Climaco is telegraphing to the whole world all its supposed defects, will tourists be coming here? As for the road show that GMA's economic and financial teams are conducting abroad to sell RP, perhaps they can forget that. The Chengs will probably lose the airport, but the biggest loser will be the government.

Frustrated

YOUNG BLOOD

Amadeo Biter

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

NANAY has always chided me for being generally inaccessible to the rest of the world. She would call me names, too: "aloof," *"suplado"* and *"bugalon"*(which is arrogant in Hiligaynon), among them. One time she even arrived at the conclusion that after having gone through college with some of the nation's best students, I had forsaken the huddled masses for the company of intellectuals. And hopeless radicals, she would add, since she never approved my choice of a university and would not pass up any opportunity to find fault with it.

Recently, she has further complicated her sermons with the observation that girls were shying away from me even before I could meet them.

On the occasions when she has no time to deliver a full sermon, she would sneak in a word about my being a loner, always in deep thought about the many problems of a hopeless world.

Oh yes, I am often alone with my thoughts, but who said anything about changing the world?

My mother jumps to conclusions (she always does) and oftentimes she gets carried away. But if she would just bother to ask, she would be surprised to know how far from reality her loud conclusions are.

What is it that is bothering me? I feel all alone with a broken dream and a great frustration, which is going to medical school.

I can't go to one. The family, simply, doesn't have the kind of resources it requires. Or, more accurately, Nanay simply doesn't have the kind of resources it requires. My father is retired and sickly. I even went to college on a bonded government scholarship, because Nanay, upon my graduation from high school, made it very clear that she couldn't send me to college all by herself. She teaches in an elementary school, and retires in two years. In her advanced age, she can't see me in medical school with our family's meager finances.

I can find another scholarship, or there must be some kind souls who can help. After all, I worked my butt off at Diliman, uncomfortably aware that I couldn't afford to waste time and money, and earned good grades, the kind of grades that merit a medal during commencement and put you on top of the class. The people who give out scholarships should be impressed.

I have one problem, though. And it's a big one: Nanay will have no one to take care of her in her old age, since I'd be gone for at least six years without earning a decent income. If I get a scholarship, I will have enough for myself, but nothing for her and for my sick father.

Nanay doesn't need to remind me that it will take all of herself and more to take care of a sick husband in her retirement. Already, my only sibling—an elder brother—is having a hard time looking for a secure job, and I suspect he intends to get married as soon as he finds one.

Medical school has always been a dream since my childhood. In high school and college, I tried my best to outgrow it for my own sake, and taught myself to develop some interest in esoteric things like physical chemistry, which just about everyone else in our class hated for being more math than chemistry. But childhood dreams, alas, are difficult to give up. Had I known it earlier, I would have stopped trying.

It saddens me a lot to accept the fact that medical school will remain a dream. What makes it worse is that I know I can be a good doctor, perhaps better than many of the would-be MDs I see on my way to work.

Now I must content myself with a little, consoling daydream I made to soothe my restless spirit. I imagine how good I would look in that white uniform medical students wear to their classes.

In between those daydreams, I must work. My current job doesn't pay much. Neither does it guarantee security. I know I must find another one before my mother retires. If I can't find that job in this country, I just have to look for it somewhere else.

So leave me alone with my thoughts, Nanay. Don't take me to task for being aloof, *suplado* or *bugalon*. At least not until I have sorted things out for you and me. As for the girls, they can come later.

Amadeo Biter, 21, works as a technical assistant in an international research organization.

(Also) a man's job

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"IT'S a man's job," says Dr. Rene Francia, but since he also claims to "believe in gender sensitivity," perhaps he should re-title his piece "It's a man's job, too."

"It" is family planning, and Dr. Francia, an obstetrician-gynecologist with the FriendlyCare Foundation's main clinic along Shaw Boulevard in Mandaluyong, was writing about non-scalpel (or no-scalpel) vasectomy which came into the limelight last July when Dr. Jondi Flavier shared his personal experience with the procedure in an article published in this paper's front page.

"I completely agree with Jondi when he says that family planning and responsible parenthood have too long been a burden imposed on women,'" writes Dr. Francia. "It really is very simplistic logic: women get pregnant, ergo, family planning is for women, which is why majority of family planning methods available are for women. Perhaps it is time to ask who dutifully undergoes the demands of prenatal visits during pregnancy? Who undergoes the excruciating pain of labor? Who loses 0.5 to 1.0 liters of blood with each baby delivered? Who combines feeding and nursing with household chores? It's time to give women a break and for men to take a more active role in family planning."

Hear! Hear!

* * *

OF all the methods of family planning deemed safe, effective and legal in the Philippines, only three involve men. Condom use is, obviously, limited to men, and though there is a female condom, it is not yet commercially available here. The condom, by the way, is the only contraceptive method that also provides protection against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV transmission. Vasectomy is one of two permanent contraceptive methods and the only one for men.

And the third method is? No, not withdrawal, which is not considered a safe or effective contraceptive method. It has a very high failure rate as it affords only minimal protection against pregnancy since a man may expel fluids or pre-ejaculates that already contain sperm before he can even withdraw or pull out his penis. The third method where men can take part in is natural family planning where the male partner's cooperation is crucial, mainly by agreeing to avoid penetrative sex on his partner's fertile days.

The sad news is that the most unpopular or least used family planning methods in the country are those involving men, which just goes to prove Dr. Francia's point.

* * *

BUT we were talking about non-scalpel vasectomy.

"Vasectomy is the most effective family planning method available for men," writes Dr. Francia. "It is a simple procedure where the two vas deferens...are tied and cut to prevent the exit of sperm from the testes to the penis during sexual intercourse or orgasm. No Scalpel Vasectomy (NSV) is the simplest technique that is being used today. During my two-week training in Bangkok last year, I was overwhelmed by the number of Thai men who voluntarily walk into the clinic every day to undergo NSV. I later learned that this successful outcome is a product of years of educational campaign and effective marketing. I could only dream of seeing the same situation happening here in the Philippines."

Dr. Francia says the main reason for the unpopularity of vasectomy is "Pinoy machismo." The biggest fear of men in relation to vasectomy, I gather, is that the procedure will somehow diminish their manhood, equating the procedure to castration. To this Dr. Francia replies: "Castration is the surgical removal of the testicles. Vasectomy concentrates on the vas deferens; no more, no less."

* * *

NEITHER does vasectomy affect a man's erection, sexual performance or masculinity. "The sexual function of men results from the interplay of mental and physical stimulation and is significantly dependent on the male hormones and blood vessels. None of these are affected in vasectomy."

What men may be afraid to admit, though, is that they're also scared stiff (no pun intended) of someone taking a knife to their sacred balls. Which is why, says Dr. Francia, NSV is very special. "The simple procedure is done under local anesthesia. It involves the three-finger technique which allows the vas to be brought beneath the scrotal skin. Two especially designed instruments are then used to grasp the vas and hook it out through the scrotal skin to be tied. A very short segment can then be cut. The procedure leaves a very small and superficial opening on the scrotal skin (less than one cm) and is invisible after it closes in two to three days. It naturally follows that without the scalpel, there is no incision. Thus, there are NO STITCHES in NSV. This simple technique has brought the rate of complications (infections and bleeding) associated with the traditional open technique to a minimum."

A man who's undergone NSV must wait for a "grace period" of three months or after 20 ejaculations "required to clear out the remaining sperm in the upper segment of the tubes," says Dr. Francia. The couple is therefore advised to use back-up methods or abstinence to avoid an unwanted pregnancy. The client is also advised strongly to come for follow-up procedures and give semen samples to check for the presence of sperm. The procedure is considered a success once the sperm count reaches zero.

FriendlyCare has an NSV Team in all its clinics in Metro Manila, with Dr. Francia assigned to perform NSV in FriendlyCare clinics in San Juan, Pasay and Shaw. Apart from providing couples permanent protection against unwanted pregnancy, says Dr. Francia, another advantage of NSV, certainly not a negligible one, is "improved sexual relations." And that's not just a man's job.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO . . .?

Comelec official's murder

DIRECTOR Velma Cinco, officer in charge of the Commission on Elections' education and information department, was shot by motorcycle-riding gunmen on Nov. 20, 2001. Cinco was being driven to her office by her son Carlo when the ambush happened on Pedro Gil Street, Paco, Manila. Her sister, Marian Jayme was riding at the back. One of the assailants wore sunglasses and his face was covered with a hand towel.

Cinco was pronounced dead on arrival at the Philippine General Hospital. Her son, who sustained a wound on his shoulder, was treated at the same hospital.

Cinco had earlier replaced lawyer Angelina Matibag as EID chief. Matibag had been overheard saying, *"Palabasin ninyo ang bobong babaeng 'yan. Babarilin ko 'yan. Lahat ng sasama sa kanya isasama ko sa hukay* (Tell that woman to come out. I am going to shoot her. Everyone who goes with her I will also send to the grave)."

The National Bureau of Investigation said one Comelec employee, Conrado Robles, resembled one of the killers based on the cartographic sketches made with the help of witnesses. Robles' neighbors told NBI investigators that he was known to pull out a gun at the slightest provocation.

On Nov. 29, 2001, Robles was arrested at his residence in San Pascual, Batangas. A bolo and an unlicensed gun were found in his possession. He tried to resist arrest but was subdued by the authorities. He was brought to the NBI in Manila where witnesses identified him as one of Cinco's killers.

Murder and frustrated murder charges were filed against Robles on Dec. 14 before the Manila Regional Trial Court. The cases were assigned to Branch 53, presided by Judge Reynaldo Alhambra. Matibag was not indicted because the evidence against her was deemed weak during the preliminary investigation.

Robles pleaded not guilty during his arraignment on May 3.

Case status: The case is now being tried and the prosecution is in the process of presenting evidence. Robles is detained at the Manila City Jail.

Armin Adina, PDI Research Department

Warfront Church 30 years ago

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

"WE were fighting martial rule on two fronts," recalls the battle-scarred nun. "We were clashing head-on with the Marcos dictatorship and we were also fighting to protect the rights of victims and would-be victims of martial rule."

The imposition of martial law 30 years ago on Sept. 21, 1972 found many Church leaders unprepared, but the Church was not wanting in prophetic voices, many from the rank and file, that rose from the wilderness. Not a few gave up their lives or chose roads that led to battlefields.

Ironically, the Catholic Church's hierarchy as a whole had a slower reaction time. The archbishop of Manila, the late Rufino Cardinal Santos, initially even supported the imposition of martial law. In 1973, he issued the bewildering statement that "the establishment of a new society in our beloved country as envisioned by the imposition of martial law should be hailed and welcomed by every peace-loving citizen."

His stance did not reflect the mood in the Church ranks and of his fellow bishops in outlying parts of the country. Later, it was evident that many in the cardinal's flock—particularly the militant religious and priests—were marching to a different drummer. His successor, Jaime Cardinal Sin, would later invent "critical collaboration" which, fortunately, albeit slowly, increasingly became critical rather than collaborative. But that is another story.

It was the religious orders of women and men that reacted strongly and swiftly to martial rule as they were in touch with day-to-day realities and grass-roots communities. Recalls a nun, "The major religious superiors of women and men met at once. We were unanimous about one thing—martial law was immoral."

The religious heads were something to contend with. Because they sometimes upstaged the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), "some of the bishops were *napikon* (piqued)," recalled one religious superior.

A response of the religious orders to martial law excesses was the formation of task forces: Task Force Data Gathering, for the collection and distribution of information (which the military considered subversive and seized), Task Force for Urban Conscientization, Task Force Orientation of Church Personnel and Task Force Detainees.

In November 1972, the Association of Major Religious Superiors that represented some 13,000 women and men religious wrote President Marcos a strongly worded letter saying that "the sudden promulgation of new laws as well as their uneven application can create a general climate of uncertainty which will in turn generate confusion and fear." It warned "of arbitrary decisions when the decision-making process is highly centralized, secret and allows no recourse."

The CBCP did issue a letter for the faithful signed by its president, Archbishop Teopisto Alberto (although approved by Marcos), a week after Sept. 21. The letter was open to varied interpretations. It was neither here nor there, neither hot nor cold.

The militant Church rank and file could only chafe and seethe. For even before the CBCP could issue its statement, five foreign priests—two Jesuits, two Franciscans and a Sacred Heart Missionary—had already been arrested. Later, several more would be deported.

Worse, Cardinal Santos even threatened to expel five congregations from his diocese. That would have been a badge of honor. The progressive bishops were not happy with the official CBCP stance. Seventeen bishops, nine major religious superiors and six religious wrote Marcos "to supplement the CBCP letter." The letter had strong requests: that martial rule be shortened, detainees be dealt with justly in the civil courts and the innocent released, and basic freedoms, like of speech and the mass media be restored.

A polarization within the Church would have been welcomed by the dictatorship. There were those who feared for the survival of the Church. Church workers and religious were not exempt from the excesses of martial rule. That year, one priest working in Mindanao was heavily tortured for being outspoken.

One of the fruits of the meetings between the CBCP and the Department of National Defense (DND) then headed by Juan Ponce Enrile was the formation of the church-military liaison committee. This was the forum for complaints and communication. Later the DND issued a directive that no arrest or raid of religious establishments shall be effected without prior consideration and should be in the presence of the highest senior religious superior.

The military thought it had found a forum to subtly persuade the Church to soften its denunciation of injustices. The military establishment could not appreciate the manner in which the Church played its role in building a just and humane society and opening the eyes of its members.

The militants within the Church pushed on, boycotting the 1973 plebiscite on the Constitution which Marcos wanted ratified. There were four more referendums after that and each time, "Boycott!" was the battle cry.

The Protestant churches were not to be left out. They had many strong and prophetic voices at that time. They joined the militant Catholics in exposing the corrupt and oppressive dictatorship.

With legitimate newspapers shut down and replaced by "New Society" mouthpieces, many church people became experts in the underground communication apostolate. Religious houses shared their resources and equipment for production and dissemination of information. But the claws of the dictatorship often caught up with the Church's underground press. Nothing stopped us.

Indeed, the cumulative efforts of Church people contributed to the eventual downfall of the dictatorship.

LETTERS

Focus on real problems

OVER THE LAST few weeks, many journalists have written negatively about the Impsa contract to rehabilitate and expand the Caliraya-Bacnotan-Kalayaan power system.

It seems too much of a coincidence that they would all decide to write on the same subject at the same time, so it would seem someone has it in for Impsa and is feeding the media with deliberate falsehoods. (The attack on coal-fired power plants is another example of where this seems to be coming from.)

I don't know if corruption was involved in the original contract. But I do know Impsa is doing an impressive job on the rehabilitation.

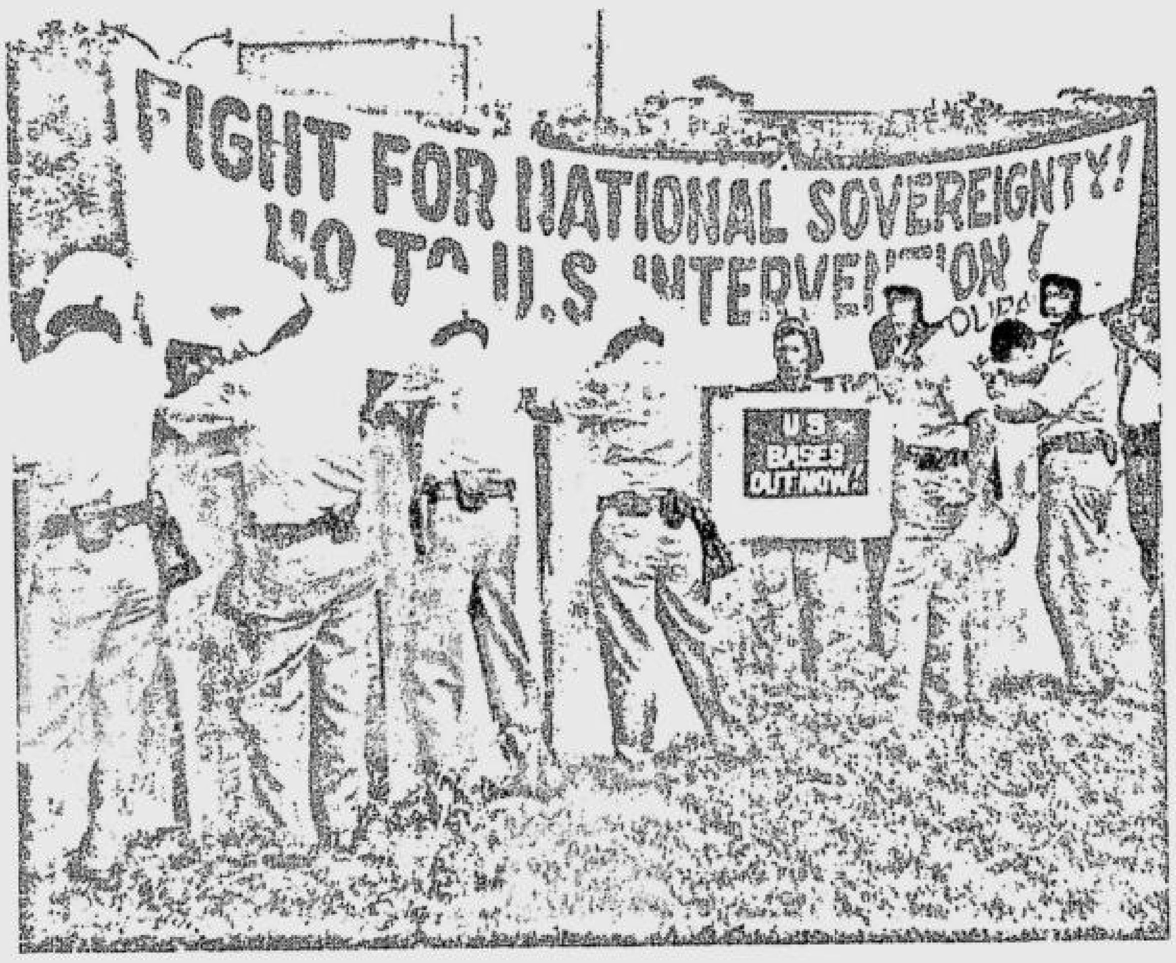
I'm up there every weekend and see the intensity of work done. At 11 o'clock on Saturday night they were still working.

Is anyone working on the equally critical airport roads? At 8:15 a.m. on a Monday morning there was no activity on that area, and it took me one and a half hours to get from Alabang to the airport for my one-hour flight to Bacolod! Why isn't this a 24-hours-per-day, seven-days-per week highest priority project, as the Impsa project seems to be? Why aren't we attacking the people who are not doing this work, instead of attacking Impsa?

I suggest we focus on where the real problems are. They certainly aren't in the work being done by Impsa. They certainly are in the desultory performance of perhaps the most important road today: the one going to the airport.

If you want foreign investment, as the country desperately needs, get angry with the contractors (who are not) building the airport roads. Not someone who is doing a good job.

—PETER WALLACE,
president, Wallace Business Forum, 14/F Sagittarius Bldg.,
HV dela Costa St.,
Salcedo Village, Makati City


FIGHT FOR NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY!
NO TO U.S INTERVENTION!
U.S BASES OUT NOW!

Say no to US war on terrorism

SEPT. 16, 1991 was a rainy day and the blessings of heaven poured out in celebration of the Filipino people's victory in terminating the unjust US-RP Military Bases Agreement. The victory of Sept. 16 was the fruit of a long and hard struggle to assert the sovereignty and dignity of the people.

A decade has since passed, but the terror of US militarism and violence continues to hound the Filipino people, especially the women and youth. Already having welcomed the deployment of thousands of US troops for the so-called Balikatan joint military exercises, the Macapagal administration is now paving the way for the possible return of permanent US military bases via the proposed Mutual Logistics Support Agreement, an agreement that is obviously one-sided in favor of US interests.

The reentry of even more American troops for longer periods under the Balikatan exercises in the different parts of the country is not only unconstitutional but more importantly tramples upon our national sovereignty!

We, Catholic, Protestant and Muslim members of the Ecumenical Women's Forum (EWF) say no to the return of US military bases and reentry of American troops. We do not want a repeat of the abuses and degradation we suffered during the decades of US military bases before Sept. 16, 1991. We remember the injustice and oppression. We remember the victims and their suffering: women and youth turned into commodities in the flesh trade for the "rest and recreation" of American soldiers; hundreds of Amerasian children who were abandoned; the farmers and Aeta families of Central Luzon displaced from their own lands to turn vast hectares of prime agricultural land into massive military facilities; the scavengers who were shot to death, while not one abusive American soldier was punished. Even now many suffer sickness and death from the toxic wastes left by the American bases.

Healing the wounds of violence inflicted by the US military presence is not easy. Complete healing is possible only if we swear to never allow foreign military presence and intervention in national affairs, never again to abet wars of terror and aggression, and the consequent violation of women's rights.

Eleven years later, as we salute the Magnificent 12 Senators who heeded the cries of the people, we salute the courage and untiring efforts of the people who continue to oppose US aggression and intervention.

We reject the "war without borders" of US President George W. Bush and the ignominious acts of the Macapagal administration to drag the Philippines into such wars against Iraq and other perceived terrorists.

As we celebrate the 11th year of our victory in the struggle against the US bases, it is fitting to renew our commitment to say no to the US war on terror and its militaristic approaches in solving problems.

—CARMENCITA KARAGDAG
and SR. XAVIER MARIE BUAL, SPC,
co-convenors, Ecumenical
Women's Forum

GMA broke no law

I WOULD like to convey our extreme disappointment over your story "President almost breaks law" (PDI, 9/12/02), which stated, among others, that "President Macapagal-Arroyo came close to trespassing yesterday morning on a private property in Antipolo City suspected of harboring some P1.8 billion worth of smuggled rice."

To begin with, the area in question is not private. It is a customs-bonded warehouse. As such, it is considered an extension of the Bureau of Customs office. It is deemed a public place and therefore even if the President had gone inside the premises, she would not have been guilty of trespassing.

The incident in question happened in the morning. We had already clarified the actual events twice with the Malacañang Press Corps: first, during our working lunch with the President where she made the clarification and second, during our afternoon press briefing. We explained that the President was already in the area and merely wanted to give moral support to the National Bureau of Investigation men, who had been staking it out for several days awaiting the issuance of the warrant of seizure and detention which would enable them to seize the smuggled rice.

The issuance of the warrant was administrative in nature and could have been done by the BOC. However, since the BOC wanted to make sure that the entire procedure was legal and by the book, they first secured from the National Food Authority a legal opinion to determine whether the rice importation was in violation of any law.

The NBI only seized the smuggled rice upon issuance of the NFA legal opinion and the subsequent BOC warrant of seizure and detention.

Despite the two clarifications, your story still portrayed the President most unfairly as a potential law breaker.

If the INQUIRER had not been a reputable newspaper, we would have concluded that the story was written with malice and with the intention of embarrassing the President.

While your paper highlighted that the President almost broke a law, the fact is that she did not. It is a shame that this fact appears to have been deliberately overlooked, and that you have instead chosen to paint an ugly picture of a reckless, lawbreaking President.

—IGNACIO R. BUNYE,
press secretary,
Office of the Press Secretary,
Arlegui Guest House,
Malacañang, Manila

'Simple'

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Simple, in its Spanish-Filipino rendition, has many meanings. It has none of the pejorative connotations the English word "simple" sometimes carries, as in someone who is intellectually compromised. Our *simple*, too, never connotes deprivation or excessive thrift.

Simple takes many forms, often a combination of what we say, what we wear, how we carry ourselves, in other words a simplicity of demeanor that avoids attention and yet attracts it, so well summarized by the Tagalog words *"may dating"*—someone who "arrives."

Simple is relative. People notice precisely because *simple* stands in such stark contrast with the ostentatious, a refreshing relief from the loud and the pretentious. In a society where discourse is often flowery and circuitous, a few simple words spoken with sincerity may be more appreciated, the words resonating long after they've been uttered. Similarly, given the strong tendency in our society to over-dress, simplicity in attire may be a way of being unfashionably fashionable.

Simple becomes a virtue, an egalitarian respect for others. Instead of being obsessed with proving one's superiority over the other, instead of saying, "I have more," *simple* speaks of solidarity: I don't have much, but whatever I do have, you are welcome to it. A simple meal, offered almost apologetically, is then transformed into a grand feast, body and mind satiated by warmth of camaraderie.

There is solidarity, too, when we say "*simple lang*" to someone unsure about being able to do something. The English, "It's so simple," it comes through almost as a kind of goading, "If you can't do it, you should be ashamed of yourself." In Filipino, "*simple lang*" is offered to encourage someone, assuring him or her that the task is not as daunting as it seems. "*Simple lang!*" that person will exclaim after it's done, triumphant and accomplished.

I tried to think of leaders who come through as *simple*, and had great difficulty. The faces that come to my mind are from an earlier era: those of Senators Jose Diokno and Jovito Salonga, for example, wisely simple. Internationally, I think of South Africa's Nelson Mandela, of the Burmese dissident Aung San Suu Kyi.

I am still hopeful that among our younger politicians, there will be someone who will make his or her name on being *simple*, cultivating greatness away from camera lights and coached spiels.

But maybe it's wistful thinking to expect to find *simple* in public life. *Simple* is all around us in our daily lives. *Simple* evokes memories of our parents at work. *Simple* is that student sitting quietly in one corner, with only his or her eyes telling you this is a wise one. Older people, women especially, are masters of *simple*, with their oblique one-liners, accompanied by a half-smile, a nod of the head, or that look which is enough to hush a room full of people.

Simple is out there, among crowds, around the corner. In our youth we think that the love of our life will come amid fanfare and thunder and lightning. Instead, quite often that one person arrives unexpectedly, standing out in a crowd because he or she was so *simple* and therefore simply irresistible.

Simple lang kasi, we recount to our friends later. Used alone, each of the two words—*simple* and *lang* —can be demeaning, but combined, they describe an overwhelming power that dazzles, that sweeps people off their feet.

Simple is not passivity; in fact, *simple* emphasizes a buckling down to get things going. People who are *simple* are driven, with a zest for life that is poured into work rather than rhetoric. And when they work, people take notice, watching, mesmerized and whispering to each other, "*Simple lang.*"

A few weeks back I wrote about the myth of Asian modesty. I pointed out that in feudal societies like our own, the powerful make it a point to be arrogant and conspicuous in their display of wealth and power. The subjugated classes, on the other hand, are forced to be meek and subservient, which is not modesty. I noted, almost in despair, that we do not have a Tagalog word for modesty.

One reader, who seems to prefer remaining anonymous (*simple lang*, I suspect) wrote to remind me that we do have a word for modesty: *simple*. He's right.

Simple is being modest without being meek. *Simple* is standing for what's right, assertive yet respectful. *Simple* is a generosity of mind, and of spirit. When we spend less time preening ourselves, thinking of ways to gain people's attention or selling ourselves, we end up with more time to give to people, doing what needs to be done and helping them discover the joy and power of passions simple, *simple*.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

No reason for humor

WE are writing this letter in connection with your Sept. 17 editorial in which you described the critics of President Arroyo's "Men in Black" pictorial for the Philippine Tatler magazine as "humorless." Among these critics was Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta, who had scored the President for putting "hype over substance" in coming up with this glitzy photo opportunity with four of her high-ranking Cabinet members.

The issue here is not the "fun" or "humor" behind this pictorial, but the reality that Malacañang seems to have become "rudderless" amid pressing national concerns that require its undivided, serious attention.

Oreta stands by her position. Malacañang has become too engrossed with photo opportunities that it has glossed over the fact that much more needs to be done to save our struggling economy and restore peace and order amid a resurgent kidnapping wave.

For the senator, matters such as the survival of our economy and the looming war in the Middle East cannot be taken lightly. We cannot see the "fun" in this photographic indulgence while the peso continues its downward slide vis-à-vis the dollar, or while institutions commissioned by the government to come up with a favorable assessment of our economy, such as the Deutsche Bank, cannot find anything positive to say about the President's economic leadership. The Deutsche Bank ironically, is the sponsor of the Philippines' forthcoming economic roadshow and former employer of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, the skipper of the administration's economic "dream team."

Oreta also cannot bring herself to smile when she sees President Macapagal in black sunglasses posing a la "Men in Black" when out in the streets, criminals continue to roam without fear, kidnapping even the children of a congressman right here in Metro Manila. In other areas a businesswoman in Binondo also gets kidnapped, another one also suffers the same fate in Carmen, Pangasinan. And the good news about the release of a Filipino-American boy in Cagayan de Oro City from his abductors has been overshadowed by the kidnapping in Marawi City of four teachers from the Mindanao State University. Tell us, how we can find the time to humor ourselves amid these grave concerns?

—BRIAN RAYMUND S. YAMSUAN,
chief of staff of political affairs,
Office of Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta, Senate, Pasay City

Outrage over fate of deportees

WE, the victims of sex slavery from Lila-Pilipina, are outraged by the tragedy befalling our fellow Filipinos deported from Malaysia. It is disheartening for us to hear of such ordeals happening again to our women forced upon by foreign authorities. We fervently hope that the victims would get justice in record time so as not to prolong their agony and suffering. In our experience, we have endured the victimization for most our lives.

All government action will be reduced to posturing and lip service if it does not show sincere determination in attaining justice for the victims. Aside from damage control, the government must address this issue in its totality and institute reforms to prevent our countrymen from leaving our land and putting their lives at stake just to survive.

For the victims of military sexual slavery, it has taken us a decade to get this close to justice.

—RICHELDA EXTREMADURA,
vice chair/coordinator,
Lila-Pilipina Inc., 35 Scout Delgado St., Roxas District,
Quezon City

Marikina on a larger scale

AS far as relevant and responsible programming is concerned, I am convinced that GMA-7 has decisively outshone other television stations. Its news items are timely and informative. Investigative reports are very enlightening and educational.

Most GMA shows are appealing to fastidious television watchers, so that they don't have to change channels in search of other programs. Meaning, the programmers cater to what the public needs.

One of the challenging GMA shows is "Debate" hosted by Winnie Monsod and Oscar Orbos who, thank God, can ably manage the flying tempers of participants in what has become a battleground of free expression, truly a forum for democratic encounters.

In its latest show last Sept. 12, I was intrigued by the arguments of Rep. Augusto Syjuco and Nathaniel Santiago advocating the sidewalk vendors' side against Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando's drive to recover the streets and sidewalks from them.

Obstructions and eyesores caused by these vendors are a major cause of heavy traffic in Metro Manila. With the visible effects of Fernando's efforts in metropolitan streets, including smoother flow of traffic, the public now feel liberated from the tyranny of conquerors, the vendors.

Now, Syjuco and Santiago want them back for their livelihood. What good is the welfare of thousands of sidewalk vendors compared to the convenience of millions of motorists, public utility vehicle drivers, daily commuters, pedestrians and all lawful users of sidewalks and streets?

These vendors should ply their trade where they will not pose hazards to traffic and not be a public nuisance. The Baclaran vendors can occupy the available reclaimed area.

The vendors have yet to realize that streets have been built for vehicular traffic and sidewalks for pedestrians, not vendors.

Sidewalk vendors squat on public domain and yet claim the right to occupy them. Worse, they mushroom wherever people converge or pass like the Redemptorist Church in Baclaran. They totally block passengers and all but close off traffic in the entire vicinity from the Redemptorist Road, Harrison Boulevard up to the Baclaran-Pasay boundary in Taft Avenue.

We hope Metro Manila will become another Marikina City on a larger scale. *Mabuhay ka*, Bayani Fernando.

—ALFRED L. JUNTILLA,
president, Environmental Livelihood & Dev't. Foundation,
416 Hansuyin Village,
Las Piñas City

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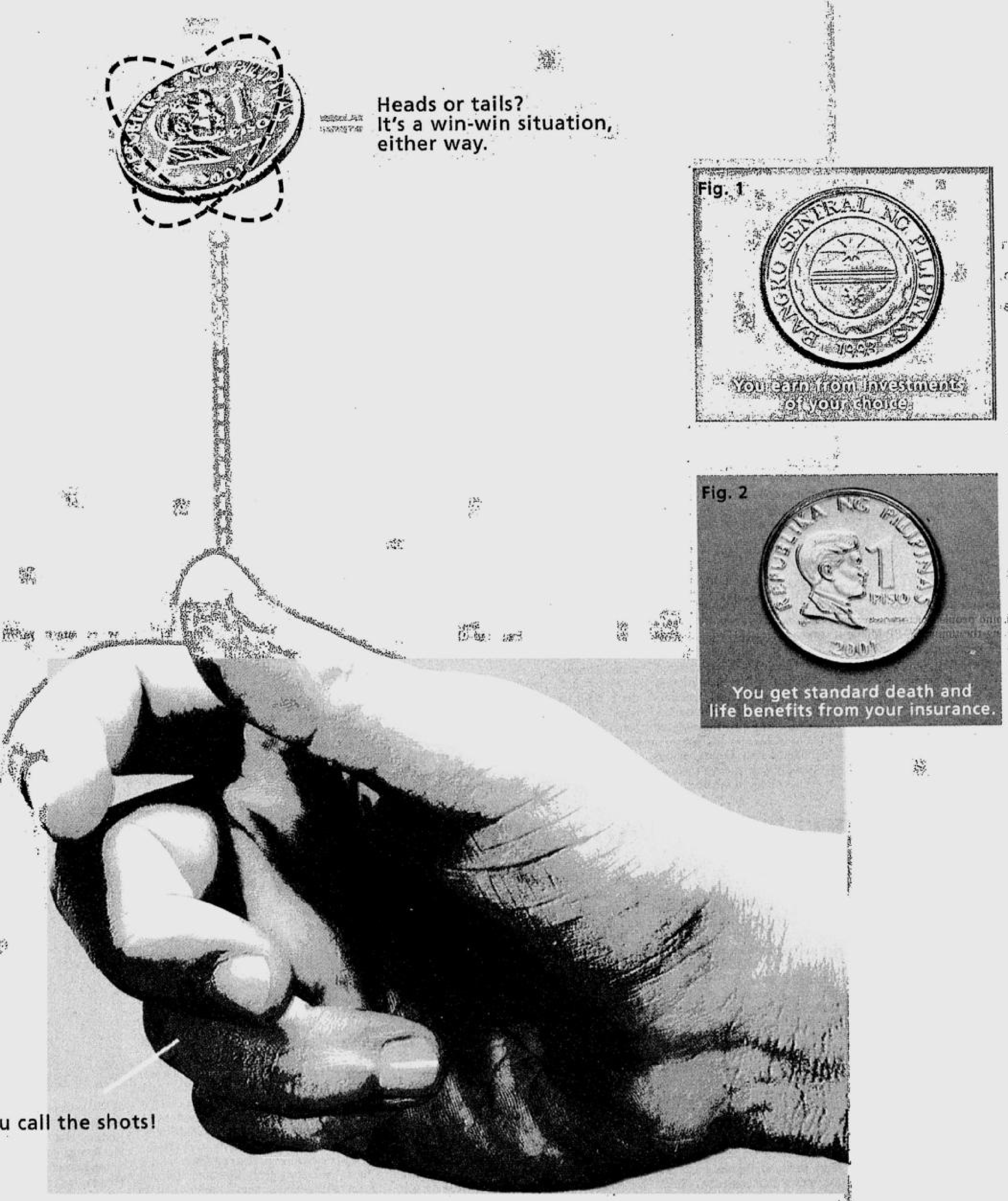
Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

INVESTMENT OR INSURANCE?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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

World leaders split on Iraq

UNITED NATIONS—Russia and the United States clashed openly on Tuesday over whether the United Nations must give arms inspectors stronger powers as Iraqi and UN experts kicked off talks on the mechanics of allowing the inspectors to resume a task abandoned nearly four years ago.

The disagreement, at a news conference at UN headquarters in New York, suggested that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has started to make cracks in the broad consensus against him by backing down when faced with the threat of US attack.

It also revealed a split between those governments whose main concern is to avert a US attack on Iraq and those who believe the priority is to disarm Iraq at any cost.

US President George W. Bush said the UN Security Council "must not be fooled" by Iraq's offer, while the Pentagon planned for possible war and arms inspectors, responsible for checking Iraq for nuclear, chemical, biological and ballistic weapons, prepared to return.

Chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix met top Iraqi arms experts on Tuesday briefly to discuss the inspectors' readmission. The two sides will meet again in Vienna during the week of Sept. 30. A precise date has not been set.

Bush told the United Nations last Thursday it should no longer allow Iraq to defy resolutions dating back to the 1991 Gulf War, particularly those on weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq responded on Monday with an unconditional offer to readmit inspectors. They left Iraq in December 1998 on the eve of US-British bombing raids to punish Baghdad for alleged non-cooperation and have not been permitted to return.

UN inspectors who did go into Iraq during the 1990s complained of hindrance and deceit by the Iraqis, while Baghdad accused them of spying for the United States.

The government in Baghdad said its offer had robbed the United States of any reason to wage war. Iraqis in the street welcomed their government's sudden shift, but some feared it would not stop the United States from attacking.

World oil prices fell on Tuesday as traders' fears of imminent military action receded. International benchmark Brent crude oil fell 55 cents to $27.97 a barrel.

The focus at the United Nations on Tuesday was whether the Iraqi offer had removed the need for a new resolution to give the inspectors new and stronger powers.

Russia, one of five council members with veto power, told the news conference that the Iraqi offer made further action by the Security Council unnecessary at this stage and that the inspectors did not need additional instructions.

"From our standpoint, we don't need any special resolution," Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said. "All of the necessary resolutions are to hand."

"What procedures they should follow, well we know those too. All of these matters were agreed to during the preliminary inspections (in the 1990s)," he added.

But Bush was adamant, saying: "The Security Council must act, must act in a way to hold this regime to account, must not be fooled, must be relevant to keep the peace."

The Bush administration, which wants to get rid of Saddam and does not trust Iraqi promises, said it wanted a Security Council resolution spelling out Iraq's obligations and stating the consequences for failure to comply.

"The only way to make sure it is not business as usual and to make sure it is not a repeat of the past... is to put it in the form of a new UN resolution," US Secretary of State Colin Powell told the news conference in New York.

"It's quite appropriate... for the Security Council to consider the circumstances under which they might return, what they must be free to do, what additional instructions may be appropriate," Powell added.

Canada backed the US position but Egypt and France tended toward the Russian position. The European Union and the United Nations adopted stances midway between the two. *Reuters*

IRAQI soldiers stand behind coffins in the middle of the desert at the Iranian border near the town of Fakke, 400 km south-east of Baghdad, Sept. 17. As Iraqi government tried to avoid another conflict in their oil-rich country by offering to re-admit UN weapons inspectors, the Iraqi army exchanged 120 coffins with Iran which contained the remains of victims of their fierce war with their neighboring country.

REUTERS

Tit for tat? Blast injures 5 Palestinian children

HEBRON, West Bank—An explosion rocked a West Bank school on Tuesday, slightly injuring five Palestinian children, and Israeli forces destroyed metal workshops in the southern Gaza Strip that they suspected were arms factories.

Israeli police said the blast, near a toilet in a primary school south of the city of Hebron, was caused by an explosive device.

The explosion fuelled suspicions that Jewish vigilantes might have been involved because of a similar incident in a Palestinian school near Jerusalem in March in which several children and a teacher were slightly hurt.

"We are checking to see... whether a Palestinian source, a criminal source or a Jewish source (was responsible)," police spokesman Gil Kleiman said of the latest blast, in Yatta, a West Bank village under Israeli security control.

The YESHA Council of Jewish Settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip issued a statement condemning the planting of bombs in Palestinian schools.

In the latest Israeli army raid in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian witnesses said about 30 tanks and armored vehicles penetrated about two kilometers into the southern city of Khan Younis.

The army, which has stepped up raids in Gaza while enforcing curfews in West Bank cities, said its forces had demolished nine foundries used to manufacture makeshift bombs, rockets and ammunition, and detained 23 people linked to militant groups.

The owners of the workshops denied the buildings had secretly been used to make weapons. No casualties were reported and Israeli forces left several hours later.

At least 1,542 Palestinians and 591 Israelis have been killed in violence since the Palestinians rose up against Israeli occupation in September 2000. *Reuters*

Al-Qaida suspect tagged as among Pearl's killers

KARACHI, Pakistan—An al-Qaida suspect arrested along with alleged Sept. 11 organizer Ramzi Binalshibh has been identified as one of the killers of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl, a senior police official said.

The report is the strongest evidence yet of an al-Qaida connection to Pearl's kidnapping and murder, but may complicate the government's case against four men already convicted of the crime.

The police official, who spoke Tuesday on condition of anonymity, said the identification was made by Fazal Karim, one of three Pakistanis held but not charged in the kidnap-slaying.

Karim was taken Friday to a Pakistani intelligence agency safe house where 10 suspects, including Binalshibh, were held, the police official said. The group, most of whom were Yemenis, were arrested in raids Sept. 10 and 11 in Karachi, authorities have said.

Karim identified one of the Yemenis as being part of a group of three Arabs who cut Pearl's throat three days after he tried to escape, the police official said.

The official refused to identify Pearl's alleged killer by name but said he was not among the five suspects, including Binalshibh, who were handed over to US authorities Monday and flown out of the country.

Pearl, 38, was kidnapped Jan. 23 in Karachi while researching links between Pakistani Islamic extremists and Richard C. Reid, who was arrested in December on a flight from Paris to Miami with explosives in his shoe. *AP*

Kim vows to halt missile tests at summit

PYONGYANG—North Korean leader Kim Jong-il on Tuesday promised to halt missile tests indefinitely during an unprecedented summit with Japan in which he apologized for the kidnapping of Japanese citizens.

His surprise acknowledgement of the abductions removed the main obstacle to normalization of relations which could bring billions of dollars in aid to its moribund economy as the government experiments with market-oriented reforms.

"He (Kim) promised to freeze missile firing indefinitely" beyond a moratorium until 2003, Koizumi told a news conference after the summit which lasted two and a half hours in total, interrupted by a lunch break.

In August 1998, North Korea test-fired a ballistic missile over north eastern Japan, sparking security fears in east Asia.

"I have strongly protested to Chairman Kim over the abduction issue. The chairman sincerely admitted that it was done by North Koreans concerned in the past," Koizumi said. "He said it was regretful and he would apologize for the matter which should not recur in the future."

US President George W. Bush, who has branded North Korea part of an "axis of evil" with Iraq and Iran, urged Koizumi in New York last week to raise up front concerns over the hardline communist state's development of weapons of mass destruction and missile exports.

Kim, chair of the National Defense Commission and general secretary of the all-powerful Workers Party, was made to answer the US concerns, Koizumi said.

Kim, whose isolated state is making a new push for international recognition and rapprochement with South Korea, was quoted as telling Koizumi on relations with Washington: "We have always left the door open for dialogue."

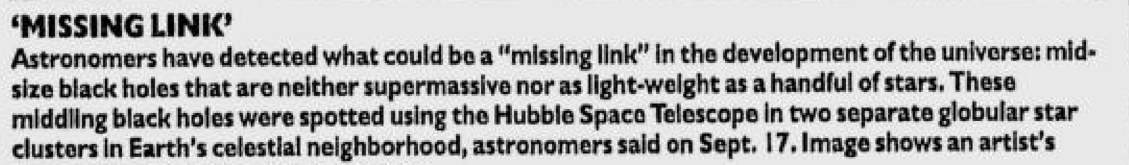
But he reiterated Pyongyang's claim it was reluctant on open its nuclear facilities to international inspections because of a delay in the supply of light-water nuclear reactors under a 1994 agreement with the United States.

The accord has put a freeze on North Korea's suspected nuclear arms program.

In a joint statement, Kim and Koizumi agreed to resume decade-old rapprochement talks next month after a break of two years and consult each other on sensitive security issues. *AFP*

SUCH sweet sorrow—A South Korean woman on a bus bids farewell to her North Korean relative as she leaves North Korea's Mt. Kumgang resort, Sept. 18. A group of 99 South Koreans arrived in North Korea on Monday for a three-day temporary reunion with their North Korean relatives for the first time since they had been separated by the 1950-53 Korean War.

REUTERS



'MISSING LINK'

Astronomers have detected what could be a "missing link" in the development of the universe: midsize black holes that are neither supermassive nor as light-weight as a handful of stars. These middling black holes were spotted using the Hubble Space Telescope in two separate globular star clusters in Earth's celestial neighborhood, astronomers said on Sept. 17. Image shows an artist's view of black hole in a globular cluster.

REUTERS

Scientists create antihydrogen

BALTIMORE—European scientists say they have created enough antihydrogen—a type of the mirror-image, antimatter stuff that fictionally powers spaceships on Star Trek—to test a widely held basic model of the universe.

While antihydrogen has been made before, the more than 50,000 atoms created at the CERN particle accelerator in Geneva are "by far, the most produced," said Jeffrey Hangst, a leader of the ATHENA collaboration, one of two groups of physicists working on antihydrogen at CERN.

The quest to understand and manipulate antimatter is one of the most competitive and esoteric pursuits in science. Not all particle physicists—even within CERN—agree with the new finding.

A spokesperson for the competing ATRAP Collaboration at CERN said he doubts that antihydrogen had been produced in the latest experiment. The ATHENA group relied on indications of the simultaneous destruction of antihydrogen's two atomic particles—the positron and the antiproton—to show it had been produced, said Harvard physicist Gerald Gabrielse, spokesman for the ATRAP group.

"Our long experience with these very difficult experiments warns that observing simultaneous positron and antiproton annihilation does not ensure that antihydrogen has really been produced," Gabrielse said.

ATHENA researchers, whose work appears in Thursday's issue of the journal Nature, plan to make more antihydrogen to test the Standard Model, equations that explain the nature of matter and energy.

If the antihydrogen doesn't behave the same as normal hydrogen "the textbooks would have to be rewritten," said Hangst, who is a physicist at the University of Aarhus in Denmark, along with his CERN work.

"It would imply that we have overlooked something fundamental about how nature works," Hangst said. "Such a discovery certainly wouldn't help you to build a better computer or TV, but it might shed some light on why we have a universe that looks the way it does."

Antimatter is the mirror image of conventional matter with opposite properties. Antimatter is destroyed whenever it collides with matter, turning both into bursts of electromagnetic radiation. Scientists believe this process was crucial to the fiery creation of the universe billions of years ago. *AP*

Across the NATION

Assistant Editor **Tony Bergonia**

Army says guards behind kidnap of MSU teachers

COTABATO CITY—The military confirmed reports that disgruntled security guards of the Mindanao State University (MSU) in Marawi City were behind last week's disappearance of at least four teachers there.

Col. Francisco Simbajon, acting operations officer of the Army's 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City, said the security guards were so peeved at the delayed release of their salaries that they decided to kidnap Salvacion Miken, Emma Karaan, Editha Buntilao and Luzvillar Castillon.

Simbajon would not confirm, however, if the security guards have become members of the Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom group.

Senior Supt. Acmad Omar, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao police chief, earlier said the abductors were followers of slain Pentagon leader Faizal Marohombsar.

He said the suspects were demanding P2 million in ransom.

The ARMM police also said they were verifying reports that the kidnapping was part of efforts to oust MSU president Camar Umpa.

In General Santos, a five-year-old boy, who was declared missing since Aug. 5, was seen in a photograph surrounded by masked armed men.

With the photograph, which was sent to the boy's parents, the police concluded that he was indeed kidnapped.

On the day of his disappearance, the boy's parents rejected suspicions that he was kidnapped.

Chief Insp. Necitas Cardos, head of the General Santos City Police Intelligence Division, said Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels could be behind the boy's disappearance.

The kidnappers were allegedly demanding P100,000 in ransom.

The boy's stepfather is a Japanese national.

In Cagayan de Oro City, Mayor Vicente Emano hit agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for spiriting out 14-year-old Starlz Lumapas on Saturday.

Emano said investigation of the boy's abduction was hampered because of the FBI's action.

He said FBI agents did not coordinate with local authorities.

Lumapas, the son of Filipino immigrants, was kidnapped early last week and released over the weekend after his family allegedly paid P1.5 million. ***Charlie Señase, Aquiles Zonio and Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

SC orders Surigao Norte gov to prove Filipino citizenship

SURIGAO CITY—The Supreme Court has ordered controversial Surigao del Norte Gov. Robert Lyndon Barbers to submit evidence in connection with the citizenship complaint filed against him last year.

In an *en banc* resolution dated Aug. 27, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, the Supreme Court asked the governor to submit in 30 days through his counsel his answer to the complaint.

The High Tribunal also requested petitioner engineer Ernesto Matugas, Barber's closest political rival, to also submit pieces of evidence.

Barbers has been accused of being an American immigrant when he ran for office under the administration party Lakas. He won over Matugas (LDP) in the May 2001 elections.

Lyndon is the eldest son of Sen. Robert Barbers and brother of Surigao Rep. Robert Ace Barbers.

The order came more than a year after the case was elevated to the SC. The Comelec dismissed Matugas' complaint for lack of evidence.

Aside from the citizenship case, Barbers is also facing deportation proceedings in the Bureau of Immigration (BI) also filed by Matugas.

The BI has yet to resume its investigation, which was suspended in September last year for still unknown reasons.

Former Gov. Francisco Matugas, Ernesto's brother, said Barbers misdeclared his true citizenship when he filed his certificate of candidacy.

Ernesto said they have evidence from the Philippine and American immigration showing that Barbers is a naturalized American citizen after he denounced his Filipino citizenship on Oct. 11, 1991.

For that, he said the "American" governor should be evicted, deported and charged with criminal cases for violating the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940 and Alien Registration Act of 1950.

But Barbers maintained that he is a Filipino. "I was born in Manila and was baptized here in Surigao City," Barbers said.

"Our political opponents just mistake me for an American because of my good looks and rosy cheeks," he added. ***Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Mayor Osmeña demolishes hawkers' stalls near historic Cebu church

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—For 30 years, the stalls along the entrance of the historic Basilica Minore del Sto. Niño had been considered a landmark.

But at dawn Tuesday, at least 77 stalls selling religious icons and flowers were demolished on orders of Mayor Tomas Osmeña.

Members of the Sto. Niño Sidewalk Vendors Association (SNSVA) tried to stop the more than 40 personnel of the city's Squatters Prevention Encroachment and Elimination Division (Speed) from destroying their stalls at about 4:40 a.m.

But their cries and screams fell on deaf ears as the demolition team went ahead with their task. In the end, the vendors just watched helplessly as their stores were torn down. Other vendors went home, as they could not bear the sight.

At least 115 policemen were deployed to the demolition site to "make sure violence would not erupt," said Supt. Josephus Angan, acting Cebu City police chief.

Traffic from Osmeña Boulevard to the corner of D. Jakosalem Street was closed until 9 a.m. when the demolition was completed.

Osmeña wanted to remove the stalls near the main gate of the centuries-old Basilica to ease traffic congestion. The church is the country's main worship ground for devotees of the Sto. Niño, Cebu's patron saint.

The mayor first announced the removal of these stalls in December last year and gave the vendors until Jan. 31 to leave.

The deadline had been reset several times to allow the negotiations between the vendors and city hall. When the negotiations failed, the mayor ordered the sealing of the Basilica's main gate on Sept. 11.

But the mayor's move generated adverse public reaction. Three days later, he bowed to public pressure and ordered the immediate removal of the steel fence that barricaded the Basilica's entrance.

On Monday afternoon, Osmeña ordered the demolition of the stalls that were "illegally" occupying the sidewalk at the Basilica.

Basan Amora, SNSVA president, lamented that Osmeña and other city hall officials had deceived them.

He said they had promised to voluntarily destroy their stalls only after the mayor ordered the demolition of the stalls constructed by businesswoman Conchita Tan along D. Jakosalem Street at the back of the church.

But Osmeña said the stalls occupying the sidewalk along Jakosalem Street would be next.

Bells to toll at rally against PPA

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Church bells will ring here today to accompany a 10-minute voluntary power shut off on the eve of a Panay-wide prayer-rally against the purchased power adjustment (PPA).

Fr. Marco Solayao of the Philippine Independent Church (PIC) told a news conference yesterday that the ringing of church bells in at least three parishes of the PIC in this city would be synchronized with the countdown preceding the power shut off.

"We hope this will send the message to our government that the people have had enough of the PPA," he said.

Jeffrey Celiz, chair of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) in Panay and convenor of the People Opposed to Warrantless Electricity Rates (Power of Iloilo), urged Ilonggos to turn off their lights and electricity for 10 minutes starting 7 p.m.

The countdown would be aired over a local radio station, he said.

"We do not aim for a blackout but a symbolic show of outrage against this unjust imposition," said Celiz.

The PPA is an automatic cost recovery mechanism set up by National Power Corp. (Napocor) and distribution utilities to cover fluctuations in fuel prices, power costs, and foreign exchange rate.

Leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, who were at the press conference, said they still have not reached a decision on their participation in the ringing of church bells and the power shut off.

But thousands are expected to attend the ecumenical prayer-rally tomorrow, which will be led by Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo at the Iloilo Rotary Amphitheater, said Fr. Meliton Oso, director of the Jaro Archdiocese social action center.

Lagdameo issued a two-page pastoral letter on Sept. 6, urging Ilonggos to join tomorrow's prayer-rally against the PPA, which he blamed for taking away money that should have been used for education, medication and other needs of the people.

Contingents from the 87 parishes of the archdiocese and members of people's organizations and non-government organizations will assemble at the Jaro District Plaza and in front of the Iloilo City campus of the University of the Philippines in the Visayas at noon before marching to the venue of the rally.

ROUNDUP

Vigilantes hunted

CABANATUAN CITY—Top officials of Nueva Ecija and the regional police ordered last week a manhunt for members of the Red Vigilante Group who have executed suspected criminals in Nueva Ecija. Chief Supt. Oscar Calderon, Central Luzon police director, was emphatic in instructing Senior Supt. Luisito Palmera, the new Nueva Ecija police director, to "neutralize" the RVG in the province. Ka Ryan, the RVG spokesperson, said his group would stop the executions only after criminals stopped victimizing civilians.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Archdiocese launches book

INA and the Bikol People: A Journey of Faith will be launched during the Peñafrancia festivities today at the Universidad de Sta. Isabel in Naga City. The book will be presented by Fr. Willmer Tria, project director and editor of the coffee table book. Consisting of 204 pages of photos and inspiring literature, the book is available at the Holy Rosary Minor Seminary in Naga City and at SalesBoosters Inc. H.V. de la Costa St. Salcedo Village, Makati City.

Luistro's promise

LEGAZPI CITY—Albay Rep. Krisel Lagman-Luistro has vowed to expedite the release of the P5 million budget of the regional drug rehabilitation center in Comun, Malinao, Albay to ease the growing restiveness of employees. Luistro said the release of the fund has been delayed since the budget was not included in the General Appropriations Act. The Comun regional drug rehab center attends to 20 to 35 drug patients. ***Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

New cop chiefs

LEGAZPI CITY—Chief Supt. Enrique Galang Jr. turned over the command of the Bicol police force to former Central Police District director Chief Supt. Rodolfo Tor in ceremonies held at Camp General Simeon Ola yesterday. The change of command, Galang said, was triggered by the retirement of 23 police generals in the entire police force. Galang has been assigned as director of Southern Tagalog. Bicol has 114 police stations while Southern Tagalog has 147. ***Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Arts exhibit held

LEGAZPI CITY—The Bicol University Institute of Communication and Cultural Studies (BU-ICCS) in cooperation with the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Papel@atbp. Creative Promotions, in line with the 33rd Bicol University anniversary celebration, will feature a visual arts exhibit of leading national artists. Dr. Josefa Berces, dean of BU-ICCS said the exhibit entitled "Dangal ng Lahing Pilipino," is a multi-media production tour nationwide to pay tribute to Philippine National artists from 1972 to present. The art exhibit will last until Friday.

Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Oil price hike protest

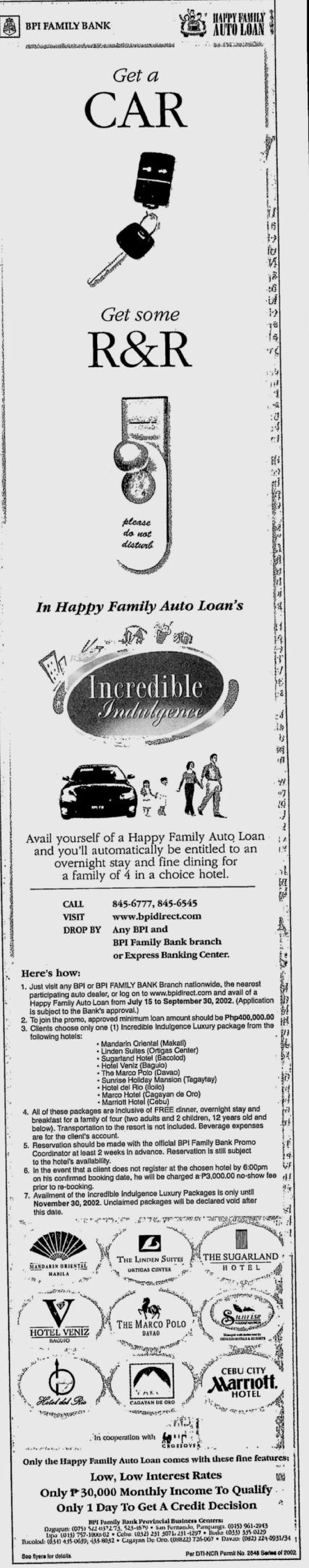
LEGAZPI CITY—National transport leaders have been going around the Bicol Region to rally the transport sector in the region's provinces to join the nationwide protests against oil price increases. Medardo Roda, Piston national chair, denounced the increases and warned that if the President does nothing about it, his group would launch a nationwide transport strike. Roda also announced his group's proposal to increase transportation fare by P1 for every five kilometers as a result of the oil price increases.

Tony Macasinag, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

New ABC head

DUMAGUETE CITY—Tinago Barangay Captain Harrison Gonzales won as Liga ng mga Barangay president in Dumaguete City. He defeated Barangay 8 chief Raul Infante during a closely fought race on Monday. Gonzales, who took over as Liga president after Eduardo Perdices retired last month, garnered 16 votes while Infante had 13 votes despite the solid vote of the opposition and independent barangay captains. Gonzales credited his victory to the strong support of his batch of "last-termer" barangay captains. "Of the 15 last-termers, only three did not vote for me," he said. Gonzales also gave credit to the support of Mayor Agustin Perdices George Sy. Infante accepted his defeat. "They had all the machinery. I could no longer match it," he said.

Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau



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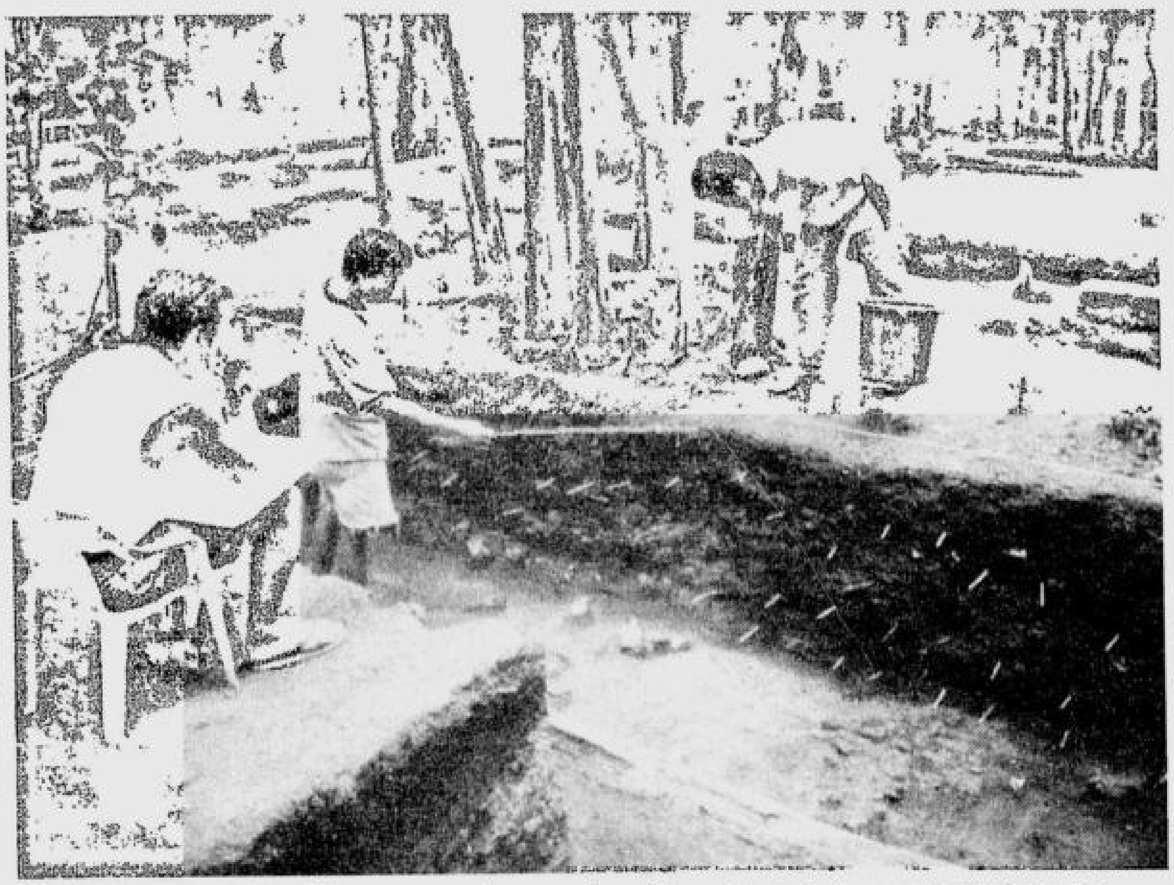
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2848 Series of 2002

INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Editor Jun Bandayrel • Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Ancient shipyard unearthed in Sorsogon

By Reynaldo T. Jamoralin
Contributor

THE RECENT discovery of an old *astillero* or Spanish shipyard, which also doubled as a metal work factory, in Donsol should be proof enough that the coastal town in northwestern Sorsogon had been inhabited by expert metal workers as ancient lore suggested.

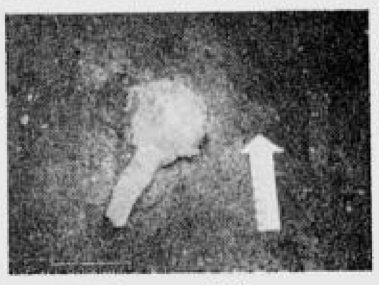


A TEAM from the National Museum examines a portion of the archaelogical excavation in Barangay Dancalan, Donsol. In the background are portions of the exposed base of a stone believed to be remnants of a smelting shop within the astillero. REYNALDO T. JAMORALIN

In fact, the town's name itself indicates that the place was a metal workers' center in ancient times. "Donsol" comes from the old Bikol word *donsolan*, or anvil, that heavy metal block with a flat surface, looking like an inverted shoe, where smiths hammered and fashioned iron objects, such as nails, bolts, blades, knives, machetes and spears.

Old folks say that even before the coming of the Spanish colonizers, Donsol was already famous for its smiths, which was why whenever one needed any kind of metal implement, he or she went or was directed to the *donsolan*.

Most of their tales, however, have been considered part of folklore or legend. For after all, there are no more traces of the supposed smith shops and their experts in today's Donsol. But with the discovery of an old smelting site, the long-held belief that the town had indeed been a metal workers' center is more than reinforced.



ONE OF the metal objects found in the Dancalan smelting factory. REYNALDO T. JAMORALIN

Shipyard

The archaeological find in Barangay Dancalan, just across the small wharf at the mouth of the long and winding Donsol River, is more than just an *astillero*, as some old folks still call the place. It has been regarded most significant by experts from the National Museum because it is, more importantly, a metal works site.

In fact, it is reputedly the first and only one of its kind to have been discovered in the country today. A report by the archaeological team from the National Museum says "it is the only site, so far, of this type, and its importance can not be overemphasized."

The discovery of the *astillero* and the subsequent archaeological work on the site started in December 1995 in what can be considered a serendipitous convergence of events and interests involving the National Museum, Department of Tourism and two local non-government entities—the Sorsogon Provincial Tourism Council (SPTC), a local association of operators of tourism-oriented establishments, and the Sorsogon Arts Council (SAC), a local association of artists and cultural workers.

Mary Jane Louise A. Bolunia, a researcher at the Archaeology Division of the National Museum and team leader of the Astillero Project, knew of the *astillero* since her childhood days in Donsol. She approached the DOT regional office and the then newly-organized SPTC for assistance to undertake an archaeological exploration.

The SAC, which then had a close working relationship with the SPTC, has been working for the preservation of local heritage, history and culture.

Dr. Eusebio Z. Dizon, curator at the National Museum's Archaeology Division and considered the country's foremost expert on ancient metals, confirmed the importance of the Donsol *astillero*. His wife is a native of Sorsogon.

Thus, the request for financial assistance was strongly endorsed to the office of then Tourism Secretary Mina T. Gabor, who immediately approved the release of funds for the project. The money was coursed through the SPTC, headed by Cecilia H. Duran, which monitored the progress of the actual excavation since it began in 1995.

Dancalan

Why exactly was Barangay Dancalan chosen as site for the *astillero* and metalworks factory by the Spaniards?

One answer could be traced to the name of the village itself. "Dancalan," a hardwood tree, grew profusely in the place as well as in most coastal villages around the province at that time. Old folks say the sturdy tree was used as a basic material for the construction of the Spanish galleon, some of the biggest of which were produced in the shipyards of Sorsogon, notably on Bagatao Island (now Magallanes town).

Dancalan wood was said to have been extensively used to make wheels for the overland transport of extremely heavy loads, such as logs, coal and ore.

Another possible reason is that there must have been an ore mine somewhere near the shipyard-cum-metalworks factory. Otherwise, why locate such a factory there if the workers still had to transport ore from a faraway place?

And, of course, the most obvious reason for the location is the human resources in the area, the expert metal workers.

The archaeological diggings and study were conducted from 1995 to 1997, resulting in the retrieval of more than 10,000 different artifacts. Most of the objects were found scattered on the ground. They included iron and copper nails, spikes and dowels, bolts and bolt heads, rivets or capstans, hook-and-eyes, hinges, wedges, clamps and clasps, blade-like items, chain rings, rods and wires, knives, scythes, ladles, sheets and scales, joints, hooks, latches and screws.

A few lead objects were fashioned into wire and sheets.

Also discovered was a huge metal anchor, which took 10 men and one carabao to haul into the interior of the barangay. Another anchor, just as big, used to lie along the shore, according to residents, but it must have been buried in silt and mud.

The anchors are believed to be from galleons built at the Dancalan *astillero*.

Found in abundance in the site were earthenware molds, presumably used to shape iron materials; stoneware sherds and fragments; and Chinese porcelain from the late Ming and Ching dynasties; and European blue and white ware sherds from the 18th and 19th centuries.

The stoneware and porcelain fragments indicated a flourishing trade and commerce in Sorsogon and the Bicol region with China and other parts of Asia, and even Europe.

Structure

Charcoal, coal and coke, the fuel used to generate heat for iron smelting, were also recovered. The coal is believed to have been mined and brought in from Batan Island in the Albay Gulf.

A rectangular structure, made of massive adobe blocks and measuring 20 meters long and 8.5 meters wide, was also exposed during the excavation. The base is believed to have been remnants of the building that was then the center of operations for all intensive smelting and smithing activities in the *astillero*.

The uncovered structure showed traces of a furnace and a wide smelting pan, including what residents called a *lepak* or *danaw-danaw*, a natural lagoon believed to be where the finished iron materials were cooled.

According to oral accounts by old folks, the shipyard was owned and established by a rich Spanish mestizo named Don Sabas Milleza, who migrated to Donsol from Iloilo. He constructed a house in the place, including a pier that jutted out into the river where a band would play every afternoon to the delight of residents who turned the occasion into a virtual fiesta, almost everyday of the year.

It was also Milleza who established the shop that produced the metal materials needed for the construction of the galleons, oldtimers say.

Although the actual excavation already ended and with funds from the DOT exhausted, the National Museum team said work on the site was far from over.

What the team has so far established without question is that furious smelting activities were undertaken in the area during the Spanish era. This is proven incontrovertibly by the presence of metal slags, numerous metal objects of various shapes, sizes and uses, earthenware molds, and the uncovered base structure of a large building that must have been the smelting shop or factory itself.

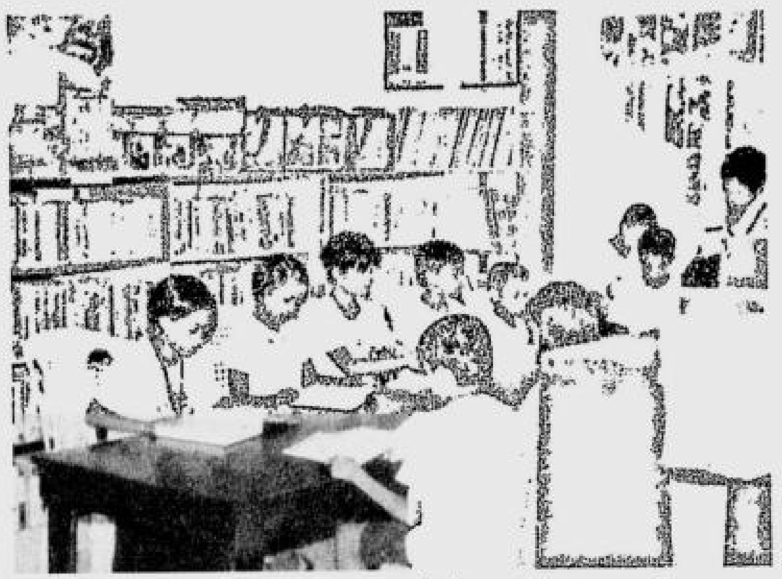
The team recommended further archaeological studies and activities to understand the site better. When did smelting start in the area? When and why was it abandoned? Why was Dancalan chosen as site for the *astillero* and smelting factory? Where did the ore used for smelting come from? Where exactly was the shipyard? These and other questions still beg for answers.

Meanwhile, it has been recommended that a small on-site museum be set up where the recovered artifacts can be safely displayed and made available to researchers, history students and cultural workers.

Albay barangay schools chosen models of excellence

By Michael B. Jaucian
Ligao City

LIKE most public schoolchildren in the country, pupils in the Ligao East Central School (LECS) in Barangay Tuburan in Ligao City used to compete with each other for books. With so few books, some pupils had not even had the chance to read one.



WITH a learning environment as conducive as this, no wonder students from Ligao Model of Excellence School excel. TONY MACASINAG

The school principal, Carlito R. Boni, said the LECS did not have enough teaching and learning materials. Rooms were not conducive to learning and there was no library to speak of.

"As a result, the students were not sociable and were not proficient in the English language," Boni noted.

But now, the picture has changed, he said.

It started when the Books for the Barrios Inc. (BBI), a United States-based foundation, chose the school for its Model of Excellence (MOE) program. The BBI is a non-profit corporation run by volunteers that collect textbooks, educational learning aids and devices from schools, publishers and students in the US and delivers them to remote public schools in the Philippines.

"Since our school became a recipient of the BBI, we now have a library equipped with modern children's books and encyclopedias, a computer room and a preschool classroom painted with cartoon characters as background and with colorful tables and chairs," Boni said.

The US foundation, he said, also funded the repair of the school's 12 old classrooms.

MOE program

The MOE program aims to improve the educational system of a school, improve its facilities, and refurnish and repaint classrooms.

A criterion for the choice of a model school is the strong commitment of the local government to the project.

The BBI found that advocacy in Ligao officials led by Mayor Fernando V. Gonzales, who was eager to improve the city's educational system.

Thus, in June 2000, Gonzales, in behalf of the city government, the Department of Education, and the BBI entered into a memorandum of agreement to adopt the LECS as an MOE school. The LECS became the 37th beneficiary of the BBI nationwide since it started in Bohol in 1998.

When the program was implemented in the LECS, Nancy Stowe Harrington, BBI president and executive director, provided the teachers and the school principal with state-of-the-art techniques and approaches in teaching through e-mailed instructions, Boni said.

"The BBI even made us visit MOE schools in Manila and attend training, all expenses paid," he said.

The LECS is the fist public school to offer pre-school lessons in Albay. Every room has its own mini-library and comfort room, and is stuffed with toys for students to play with during break time. The wall of the library is also painted with cartoon characters.

The LECS is also the first school to offer computer lessons to pupils from Grades 2 to 6.

The BBI has tapped the services of the LBC Foundation for the free delivery of the books to the recipient-schools.

The foundation has also become an active partner of the BBI in the model program. It is now involved in the Pandan Elementary School in Ligao City, which it is renovating.

Since 1998, the LBC Foundation has delivered about 527,700 books to around 700 schools in the Philippines.

Best education

Boni said that since the school became an MOE, it has changed for the better. In fact, he claimed that five of their Grade 6 pupils qualified in the entrance examination given by the Bicol Regional Science High School this year.

He said the school admitted only 80 high school freshmen out of hundreds of applicants from Bicol.

"The LECS also got the first place in the district level evaluation of schools for the school year 2001-02," Boni boasted.

The work of the teacher and the status of every learner are closely monitored, he said

"Since the implementation of the MOE program in 2000, an increase in school enrollment has been noted, as well as improvement in teachers' morale, efficiency and effectiveness, and the most important thing, increased support and cooperation from the parents and the community," Boni said.

Danny John Hanapin, a 6-year-old pre-schooler of the LECS, said he was happy and enjoyed studying in the school.

His classmate, Vivien Magdaong ,said she was learning well in school, enjoying listening to stories shared by her teacher.

Ema Offemaria, 46, said her children in Grades 4 and 5 were learning a lot, especially in computer lessons.

"One of the good things that the school is doing is that it is lending our children's books even without the library card yet. Before when there were no books available yet, I saw the students idle and most of their idle time was spent playing with their friends," she said.

Femia Jimenez said her daughter, who is in Grade 4, enjoyed hands-on computer sessions but complains of the limited time allotted. She wished that the principal could ask for more computers from the BBI.

Alma Barobaro, a computer teacher, said, " I really have to budget the time because I'm handling Grades 2 to 6. Each section has only 30 minutes to consume to give way to other sections."

The school has only nine functioning computers, Barobaro said.

Latest MOE

Because of the success of the LECS as an MOE school, the BBI and the LBC Foundation adopted another school in Ligao.

The Pandan Elementary School in Barangay Pandan, three kilometers from the city proper, has met the requirements of the MOE program. It has three classrooms to spare for use as library, computer laboratory and kindergarten classroom.

It is situated in an area with telephone lines for Internet capability, has a student population of 744 (not exceeding 800 as set in the program) from pre-school to Grade 6 for school year 2002-03, and has the firm commitment of support of the mayor, said Alfredo Saret, school principal.

The school is now called the Pandan Model of Excellence Elementary School (PMEES). It is jointly sponsored by the city government, the BBI, DepEd's Albay Division, the LBC Foundation and the Office of the Presidential Assistant for Children's Affairs.

Saret said the LBC Foundation and the BBI provided them with teaching and learning materials.

He said they started renovating the school in March, with funds coming from the two foundations. Renovation will be completed by March next year.

The PMEES has 26 teachers who are competent, resourceful and devoted in their fields of specialization and are active in the implementation of the school's mission and programs.

It has a room with 14 computer units and an audio-visual room that has yet to be finished. A television set, a radio cassette and a video player are already available for use.

Allan Matias, a computer teacher, said lessons on the basics of computer and Internet technology were now being offered to Grades 2 to 6 pupils.

"From the start of the full implementation of the MOE program, there has been a sense of excitement and keen interest not only among the teachers but also among the pupils to explore the library for any book that catches their interest. The students started to value their time and instead of playing during break periods, they read books," Saret added.

Through the great innovations and educational development introduced by the MOE program, the students have been more socially aware, he said. "They have come to realize the essence of values formation and other aspects of life."

P1.1-B 'road to perdition'

From page A1

with Ayala Land before his appointment to the PEA. He was also board chair of C&P Homes, the flagship company of Sen. Manuel Villar.

Tagud said the project was started in 2000 but most of the requests for cost adjustments were submitted to the current board for approval. "There is reason to believe that the current board was supplied with misleading information on the project in order to obtain the requested approvals that are illicit," he said.

Tagud said the original contract with JDLC stipulated that any cost adjustments be submitted first to the Office of the President for approval. "However, none of the cost adjustments that have already been paid was ever approved by the Office of the President in compliance to the contract provision," he said.

COA probe

The Commission on Audit (COA) is now investigating the new PEA scandal. Tagud asked COA Chair Guillermo Carague in a letter received Sept. 16 to conduct an investigation because the contractor was still collecting payments from the PEA.

"The tentative total project cost of P1.1 billion would make the (PDMA) probably the most expensive asphalt road in the entire country or even perhaps in the universe," Tagud said in a letter to Ms Macapagal, which he forwarded to Carague. The INQUIRER obtained copies of the letters to the President and Carague.

He told the President that stopping the anomaly "will serve your interest not only because the PEA is attached to the Office of the President but it has also a history of contract scandals in the previous administrations." Once such scandal was the PEA-Amari, dubbed the "mother of all scams."

But PEA Chair Ernest Villareal and Assistant General Manager Manuel Beriña Jr. debunked Tagud's findings.

Villareal said the JDLC contract "appears to be in order."

"Just to remove any doubt, the board decided to ask the Commission on Audit to conduct a post-audit immediately," Villareal told the INQUIRER. He said the PEA board, in its meeting on Tuesday, approved a resolution asking the COA to conduct the audit. PEA General Manager Benjamin Cariño made the formal request in a letter to Carague dated Sept. 17.

"We would like to categorically state that the authority, under the present leadership, will not tolerate any irregularity of any form whatsoever, as insinuated by certain quarters," said Villareal and Cariño in a statement. The two officials, who were appointed sometime in March last year, said the PEA shall "exert every effort to ferret out the truth."

High impact project

They said the project was "prioritized as a high-impact and far-reaching project development project" to ease traffic. "We do not understand why this project, which was started way back in 2000 and completed on April 5, 2002, should attract so much negative actions from certain quarters," Villareal and Cariño said.

"When this boulevard was completed, the public rejoiced because a first-class boulevard and a good alternative route was made available to them," Villareal said.

But Tagud told Carague that he had "strong reason to believe after the documentary review I conducted that the contract particularly of one of the three contractors is tainted with anomaly."

"The project I believe is overpriced not only on the initial contract award but also on all subsequent cost adjustments submitted by the contractor to and approved by PEA," Tagud said in his letter to Carague.

"Almost all of the contract cost, including additional contractor's claim amounting to more than P900 million on a construction of a 2.1-kilometer portion of road and a 42-meter bridge have been paid by the PEA. This contract is believed overpriced to the tune of about P600 million," Tagud said.

He asked Carague to conduct a swift investigation because JLDC still has remaining claims for payment. "Since there is probable collusion between the contractor and officers of the PEA, I suggest that an independent team of COA auditors exclude the resident auditor of COA at PEA," Tagud said.

In his letter to the President, Tagud reported that the PEA management had refused to submit complete information on the project despite his repeated requests. "This lead me to suspect concealment of material facts in order to secure subsequent supplementary approvals fraudulently for the subsequent contracts," he said.

Tagud said SM built 1,426 meters of road and a 100-meter bridge at P132.4 million, which was even less than the cost estimate of P264.3 million. DM Wenceslao built 1,186 meters of road and a 55-meter bridge at P164.7 million, also below the cost estimate of P186.9 million.

But JDLC, he said, built 2,313 meters of road and a 42-meter bridge "with payments made, and still counting, at a staggering amount of P837.3 million. The original cost estimate was P292 million. Tagud was reportedly the only director who refused to approve the cost adjustments.

"As far as I can determine, the legitimate claim of the contractor adds up to only P298 million," Tagud told the President.

"To date, however, the PEA has paid a total of P837 million, P500 million of which was paid on Aug. 20, 2002, a week after the PEA has drawn from its loan from GSIS," he said.

Apples and oranges

But Beriña, who was in charge of the project, said Tagud was trying to compare apples and oranges. "I don't know where he picked up the figures but they are wrong," he said.

Beriña said Tagud should not compare the JDLC contract with those of SM and DM Wenceslao as the portions on which the two companies built the road were previously reclaimed and did not require reengineering.

Villareal gave the same explanation. He said the SM and DM Wenceslao portions were reclaimed by a Belgian dredging firm, Jen de Nul, which drilled wick drains and poured thousands of tons of sand into the drains to make the foundation solid. He said it cost SM P500 million. "In the case of (JDLC), it had to do dig all that mud," he said.

Beriña said the biggest expense of JDLC went into the consolidation of the soil.

Tagud said he discussed his findings with the PEA board in an executive session on Sept. 10 and asked for a thorough investigation.

He did not get any response. "Instead, I received threats to my life and I gathered that some parties are now actively trying to find derogatory information to discredit me instead," he said.

Tagud said PEA management was reportedly planning to cover their involvement. "Given this situation, one of the ways I can protect myself is to bring this anomaly into the open," he told the President.

Indon held for bombings in GenSan

From page A1

TERRORIST suspect, Indonesian Uskar Makawata, one of three arrested on Tuesday in Gen. Santos City is escorted to the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation.

ERIK ARAZAS

sands of blue marlin I've caught, I can answer," Makawata said, speaking in Filipino. "But if you ask me how many people I've killed, I'll tell you I haven't killed even one small baby. I'm an innocent person."

Asked by a reporter if he was a member of the Jemaah Islamiya, a group accused of links to the al-Qaida terrorist network and of plotting to blow up the US Embassy and other Western targets in Singapore, Makawata said: "I don't know anything about that."

The three other Indonesians arrested along with Makawata by soldiers, police anti-terrorist agents and immigration officials were not linked to terrorism. But officials said the Indonesian failed to show travel documents, and would be deported if further investigations cleared them of any terrorist links.

Immigration chief Andrea Domingo said two suspects arrested in connection with the April 21 bombings told authorities that the attacks, which also injured nearly 100 people, were planned in Makawata's home in General Santos.

Terrorist cell

At a news conference, Domingo showed reporters a sketch of one of the bombing suspects as described by victims. The sketch resembled Makawata.

Speaking at the same news conference, Air Force intelligence chief Col. Francisco Cruz said the presence of shadowy migrants and a spate of bomb attacks in and around General Santos were indications that al-Qaida could be setting up a terrorist cell there through the Jemaah Islamiya.

"The possibility is there but we cannot categorically say, in the absence of concrete evidence," Cruz said.

Jemaah Islamiya is said to reach across Southeast Asia. A number of foreigners and Filipinos with alleged links to the group have recently been arrested in the Philippines.

Agence France Presse quoted an anonymous official as saying that investigations showed Makawata to be "part of a composite group with Jemaah Islamiya on bombing missions to destabilize the country."

It also quoted military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Eduardo Purificacion as saying: "(The four Indonesians arrested Saturday) are suspected members of a terrorist group. That's why they were arrested."

Two other Indonesians with alleged links to Jemaah Islamiya—Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi and Agus Dwikarna—are already behind bars in Manila for illegal possession of firearms.

Police intelligence chief Jaime Karingal told Reuters that his office had also found evidence of links between al-Qaida and some members of the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). *See related story on page A1*

But Karingal said police had not established any link between the MILF "as a group" and Osama bin Laden's network.

"As a group, no, but as individuals, yes," he said. *Reports from AP, Reuters, AFP*

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Enrile says Meralco behind anti-coal drive

From page A1

of electricity it buys from independent power producers (IPPs). Distributors like Meralco, in turn, passes on the cost to end-consumers. Meralco has its own IPPs, the two biggest being First Gas Corp.'s two power plants.

Enrile said the closure of the Calaca plant would also decongest the Batangas transmission line and allow First Gas Corp.'s 500-MW San Lorenzo plant to run. The Lopezes have a stake in First Gas, which operates the 1,000-megawatt Sta. Rita and the 500-MW San Lorenzo natural gas power plants. Both power plants are located in Batangas.

Meralco vice president Elpi Cuna said it would be "crazy" for the utility firm to campaign against a coal plant. "Why would we want to close down coal plants when our own IPP—Quezon Power Ltd.'s Mauban plant—runs on coal?" he said.

First Gas Power president Peter Garrucho said: "Since the start of commercial operations, our plants' capacity fees have not been and will not be escalated." The Sta. Rita plant started commercial operation in the third quarter of 2001 and San Lorenzo in the second quarter of this year.

DOCUMENTS, according to former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile reveal the alleged P8-billion anti-coal conspiracy and the Lopezes' sweetheart deals during a press conference on Wednesday.

ERIK ARAZAS

Garrucho said the take-or-pay provisions in contracts with Napocor were not unique and could even be considered a global practice. "Our plants' heat rates are also comparable to those of world-renowned companies like General Electric," he said. "We follow international standards."

Enrile also assailed the sweetheart provisions between Meralco and First Gas, which, he said, were "anti-consumer." He said Meralco's contrac t with First Gas overpriced fuel costs by a total of P70.5 billion.

"I never thought that this evident larceny would be so grand and clearly conspired against the very people that Meralco is supposed to serve," Enrile said.

He said Meralco's contracts with First Gas provided automatic increases in capacity fees, which are 18.8-percent higher than the rate approved by the government. "These escalation clauses represent costs of about P1.3 billion a year or P31.4 billion over the 25-year contract period," he said.

In addition, Meralco and First Gas have three schemes to overprice fuel charges totaling about P39 billion in underserved profits, according to Enrile.

The are:

- Overstatement of guaranteed heat rate at 6,559 British Thermal Units per kilowatt-hour instead of the correct 6,204 BTU/kWh. The difference translates to P662 million a year or P16.65 billion in 25 years.
- Minimum take-or-pay provision on fuel resulting in windfall revenues of P500 million a year or P12.5 billion in 25 years.
- A "very suspicious" 4-percent margin of error in the metering of fuel, equivalent to P400 million a year or P10 billion in 25 years.

CNN report on al-Qaida . . .

From page A1

syndicates in Mindanao.

He also said the government fully trusted the MILF's commitment to the peace process.

A CNN report aired Tuesday night said that the MILF had established links with the al-Qaida and that this relationship started when the MILF sent 1,000 fighters to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan.

CNN said that in 1995, the MILF set up a terrorist training camp from which calls from Osama bin Laden were monitored in 1999 asking the separatist group to put up more such camps for al-Qaida members.

From 1996 to 1998, more than 1,000 Indonesian mujahideens trained at Camp Hudelbiah, the training facility set up for foreign terrorists, CNN said, adding that a second facility, called Camp Palestine, was also utilized by al-Qaida members.

But military officials yesterday said the camps were dismantled during the government's "all-out war" against the MILF.

"That's an old story," said Lt. Col. Danilo Servando, head of the Armed Forces' public information office. "While it is true that there were foreigners ... monitored coming in and out of Camp Abubakar ... (these movements stopped) when the camp was overrun. We have not monitored any further training in the area."

He also said past training was conducted in Camps Bushra and Abubakar.

Military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Eduardo Purificacion echoed Servando, saying: "The MILF camps were part of the 46 camps overrun by the AFP. There is no such training going on in Mindanao."

Peace agreement

Gonzales said the government panel negotiating peace with the MILF was in the process of drafting a "final peace agreement."

He said the panel was also preparing another document involving ancestral domain, one of the substantive issues in the peace talks.

"Once these papers are ready, we will do the normal back-channel effort." he said. "We're hopeful that we will have a final agreement soon."

Gonzales stressed that the CNN report, supposedly based on US and Asian intelligence sources, contained old facts.

"Look at the dates of the intelligence reports," he said.

He admitted without elaborating that before government forces captured the MILF camps in 2000, "there was one camp that was leased to some foreign group."

"But during the time of President Macapagal-Arroyo, when we started the peace process, we have not seen any revival of this effort," he said.

Gonzales offered an explanation for reports of renewed activities in MILF-controlled areas.

"The MILF may have been assembling their men. They have to take care of their men," he said.

Asked if he was confident that the MILF was not at the bidding of al-Qaida, Gonzales said: "I'm very confident."

"You can find out," he added. "We will be very happy to have the documentation."

Gonzales pointed out that the government and the MILF had put up a joint monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance with the two interim agreements.

He also said officials in Malaysia and Indonesia were in close contact with MILF leaders and could attest that the group was not engaged in terrorist training activities for al-Qaida.

"We will know, and this can't be hidden," Gonzales said. "I personally would like to know if the training happened in post-May negotiations."

Southeast Asia

In Kuala Lumpur, a top Thai defense official yesterday said intelligence gathered by Southeast Asian security officials had revealed the presence of al-Qaida in the region.

"We have cooperated with other countries in intelligence sharing. We have some proof of that," Admiral Narong Yuthavong, supreme commander of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, told reporters in response to a question.

But he declined to elaborate, saying: "It is inappropriate to reveal more information."

Narong is in Malaysia for a three-day biannual intelligence meeting with his Malaysian counterpart, Gen. Mohamad Zahidi Zainuddin, who said that one of the top issues of the 10th high-level dialogue between Malaysia and Thailand was to identify ways of beating terrorism.

"That is one of the highlights of the meeting," Mohamad said. "We want to get rid of any terrorist activities here (in Southeast Asia). Al-Qaida is not the only terrorist group."

Of nearly 100 suspected terrorists being held in Singapore and Malaysia, most have been linked to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which is supposedly trying to establish a pan-Islamic state in Southeast Asia taking in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and the southern Philippines.

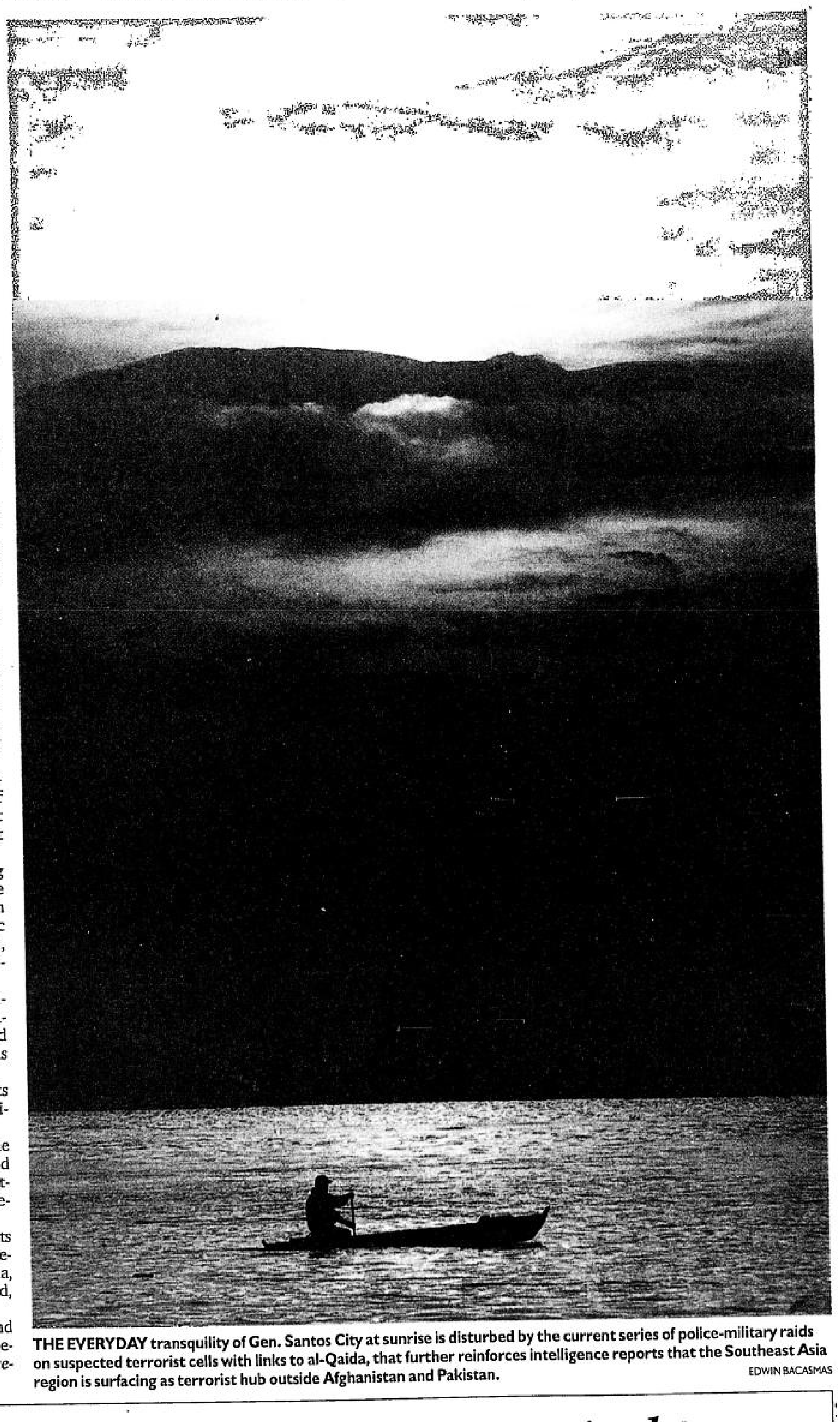
JI reportedly has close connections to al-Qaida, and some of the detainees were allegedly trained in Afghanistan when it played host to Bin Laden ahead of last year's attacks on the United States.

Indonesia has confirmed the arrest in its territory of Omar al-Faruq, said to be al-Qaida's senior operative in Southeast Asia.

Intelligence reports quoted by Time magazine this week said Al-Faruq, now being interrogated by the CIA in Afghanistan, had been coordinating disparate Islamic militant groups in the region to attack US and allied targets.

Time said it had top-secret intelligence reports in which Al-Faruq confessed to plans for "large-scale attacks against US interests in Indonesia, Malaysia, (the) Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, Vietnam and Cambodia."

The plans included simultaneous car and truck bomb attacks on US embassies in the region "on or near" Sept. 11. *With an AFP report*



THE EVERYDAY transquility of Gen. Santos City at sunrise is disturbed by the current series of police-military raids on suspected terrorist cells with links to al-Qaida, that further reinforces intelligence reports that the Southeast Asia region is surfacing as terrorist hub outside Afghanistan and Pakistan.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Radical Indon cleric still free despite mastermind tag

SINGAPORE—Elderly cleric Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, who sings the praises of Osama bin Laden, has repeatedly been named as one of the brains behind an al-Qaida-linked terrorist group in Southeast Asia. But he continues to walk free in his native Indonesia.

Ba'asyir has been fingered by Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines, where operatives of the militant Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) have been captured, and in the confessions of an al-Qaida pointman, Omar al-Faruq.

Al-Faruq, captured in Indonesia in June and now in US custody, reportedly said Ba'asyir supplied JI manpower and resources for a string of planned embassy bombing attacks across Southeast Asia on the Sept. 11 anniversary.

But despite the frequency with which the 64-year-old cleric's name surfaces in investigations into JI, Indonesian authorities maintain that there is no proof.

"So far we have not found any evidence and as such we consider him not involved" in terrorism, Indonesia's national police chief Da'i Bachtiar said recently.

Ba'asyir runs a Muslim boarding school in Ngruki, East Java, and heads the hardline Indonesian Mujahideen Council, an umbrella group for Islamic groups backing the imposition of the Islamic Sharia laws for Indonesia.

He denies any links to al-Qaida, describes Bin Laden as a "true Muslim fighter," and says accusations that he is the leader of Jemaah Islamiyah will not undermine his struggle for Islam.

Singapore claims that 13 JI operatives arrested last December for allegedly plotting to blow up US and other Western targets in the city-state have named Ba'asyir as their leader.

They described Ba'asyir, also known as Bashir, as "the amir or overall leader of the JI organization covering the Singapore/Malaysia as well as the Indonesian networks," according to a Singapore government document.

Malaysian police say Ba'asyir is a "directing figure" of a militant group there which is closely linked to JI.

But Indonesian police say neither country provided solid evidence, and an official said the JI prisoners in Singapore "did not give us any direction as to where we could look for solid proof."

Ba'asyir spent four years in an Indonesian jail in the early 1980s for anti-Suharto activities. On his release, he fled to Malaysia where he gathered with Islamic militants from throughout Southeast Asia.

They called themselves Jemaah Islamiyah, or Islamic Group, according to intelligence reports.

AFP

SPORTS

Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ◎ Associate Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

Schumacher writes editorial

MILAN, Italy — Fresh off another fantastic finish for Ferrari, Michael Schumacher defended his team's dominance, writing an editorial in Tuesday's Corriere della Sera, a Milan daily. Following Ferrari's 1-2 finish in Sunday's Italian Grand Prix (won by Schumacher's Brazilian teammate Rubens Barrichello), the Formula One world champion attempted to dispel notions that the team's dominance was ruining the sport. *AP*

FOUR DIGIT
4 2 7 0
(In exact order)

SUERTRES
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MEGALOTTO 6/45
12 18 33 34 39 43

MASTERS BILLIARDS

Reyes, Bustamante defeat foes

Newly crowned Asian billiards champions Efren "Bata" Reyes (extreme left) and Rubilen Amit display their trophies upon arrival at the airport, where they were met by PWPC (Philippine Women Players on Cue) president Bong Coo (extreme right). Reyes downed countryman Antonio Lining, 8-6, while Amit beat Singapore's Amy Hoe Shu Wah, 6-3, in the men's and ladies' finals, respectively. The eighth Asian tourney was staged by APBU (Asian Pocket Billiards Union) in Singapore last week. Yesterday, Reyes beat American Corey Deuel for his second victory in the Subic Masters.

By Dennis U. Eroa

SUBIC—Filipino billiards legend Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante stormed to their second straight victories yesterday by downing their separate rivals in the Cafe Puro Challenge of the Masters at the Subic Yacht Club.

Reyes destroyed US Open titleholder Corey Deuel, 5-0, 5-3, and Bustamante turned back former World Pool champion Mika Immonen, 5-4, 5-3.

With the picturesque Subic Bay serving as backdrop, Reyes played without mercy against Deuel, who appeared lost like a babe in the woods after getting blanked in the first set.

Filipino fans watching Reyes in action for the first time erupted in wild applause as the national icon dazzled them with his shotmaking skills, leaving the boyish-looking Deuel bewildered.

The victory was a follow-up to his 5-3, 5-0 conquest of former World Pool champion Mika Immonen on opening day.

"It's about making the breaks," said Reyes, a Puyat Sports mainstay, who will also anchor the Philippines' bid in the coming Busan Asian Games. "It looked easy but the truth was I also got nervous."

Reyes was ahead, 3-0, in the second set when a rare miss on ball No. 5 in the fourth gave Deuel the chance to come back.

The American won the rack, pumping his fist in delight, obviously relieved that he wasn't home without a point.

Reyes however quickly made it 4-1 and even as Deuel came back to win the next rack, it was clearly Reyes' day.

"I'm very happy with the crowd support. Playing here is an experience of a lifetime. I just don't want to disappoint the crowd," said Reyes, who is fresh from winning the inaugural Asian 8-ball championship in Singapore last week.

Bustamante will meet Reyes today in an all-Filipino showdown ending the eliminations.

The winner will assume the top spot and will meet the loser between Immonen and Deuel in the crossover semifinals.

The number two finisher will clash with the third placer for a seat in the finals which will give $10,000 to the winner.

The runner-up gets $7,500 and the third placer $5,000 in this tournament which gained the full support of SBMA Chair Felicito Payumo.

Cardinal Sin rallies athletes

IN AN unprecedented move, the Catholic Church has thrown its support behind the national athletes bound for the 14th Asian Games in Busan, South Korea set Sept. 29-Oct. 14.

In a message sent through Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) chair Eric R. Buhain, the Archbishop of Manila, Jaime Cardinal Sin said, "We join the entire Filipino nation in praying for our contingent who will be participating in the Asian Games."

"Let us display to the whole world not only our athletic excellence but also our camaraderie and honesty in sports," Cardinal Sin said. "Let the Philippine Team show forth the best of every Filipino. Your commitment and diligence amaze us. Your unity and discipline inspire us."

Chair Buhain, a former national swimming star, thanked Cardinal Sin.

"This is an extremely inspiring gesture from the Church and we are grateful to His Eminence for their support and prayers for our athletes who will do battle for flag and country," said Buhain.

The PSC has been, without letup, gathering support for national athletes from all sectors of society through projects such as the "Alay sa Gintong Medalya" Concert Series, Nationwide Torch Relay, and the "Puspusan sa Busan," Pep Rally and Cheering Competitions.

Danding entry leads stagfest

THE "2ND Ucap Arnis Master 7-Stag Derby" championship round, to be hosted by popular sportsman Raymond Velayo, will be held today at the Mandaluyong Coliseum.

The Sponsors are Complexor 3000, Sagupaan Mite Free, Pagcor and Washout Shampoo from Lakpue Drug Inc.

The current leaders, with three points each, are former ambassador Danding Cojuangco (Bumble Bee Balbina), Francis Lumunsad and Louie Cua (KGB LCC I), hotelier Biboy Enriquez (Firebird I), OPMI president Vic Yu (Sir Vincent), Jimmy Mariquit and Otic Geroso of Bacolod (Concierto sa Mandaluyong) and Blandy Tolentino of Laguna (San Pablo Heat).

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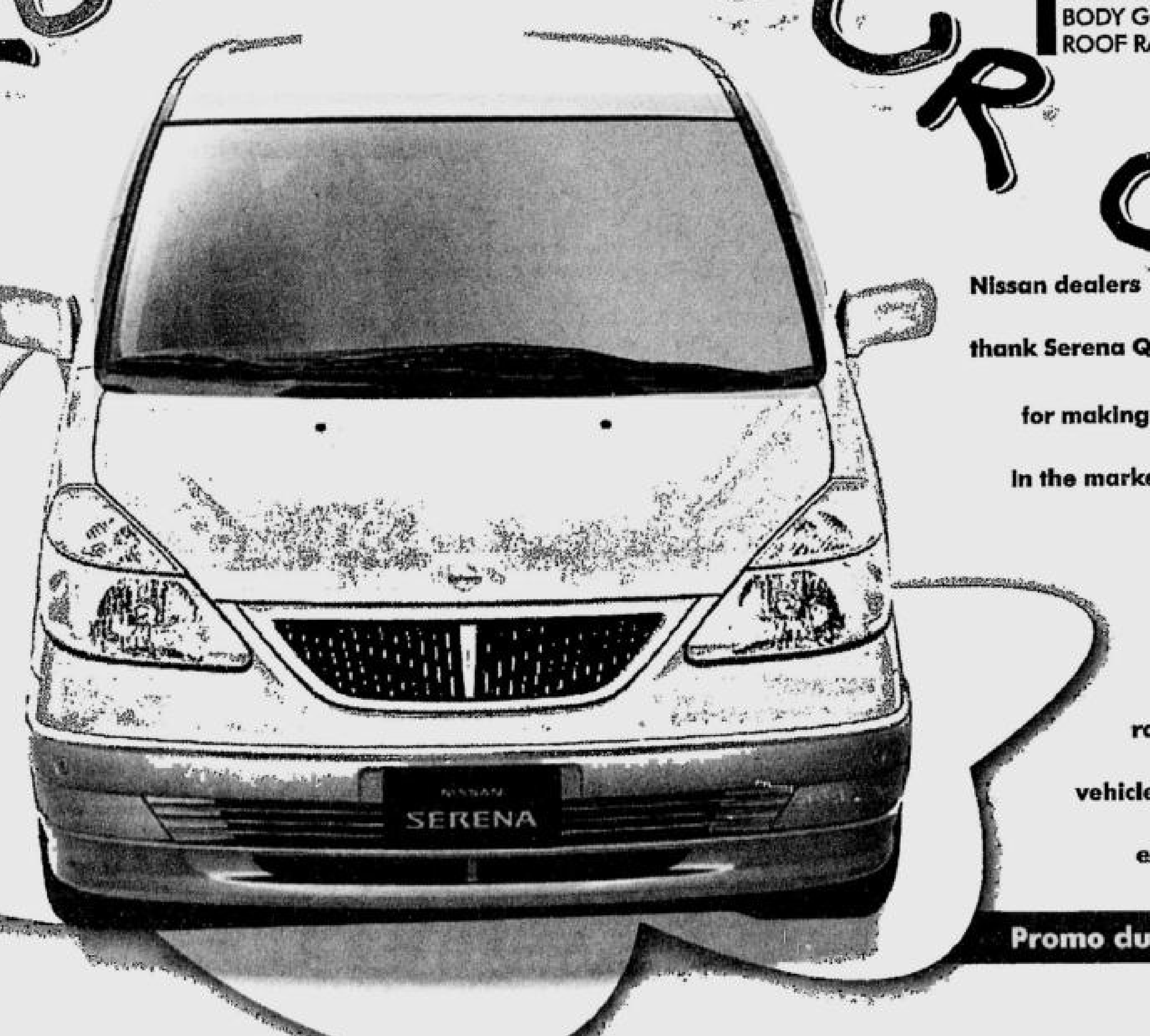

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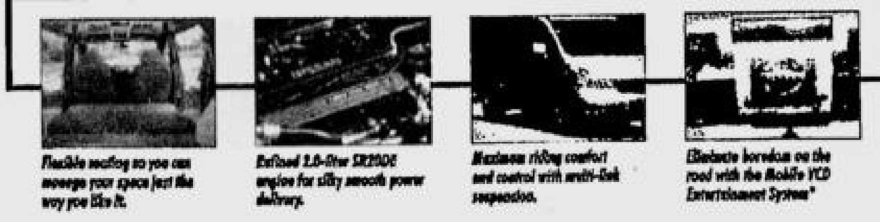

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Red Bull forces Game 7

Talk N Text coach Bill Bayno may get fined for losing cool anew

GAME TOMORROW *(Araneta Coliseum)*
6:30 p.m.—Talk N Text vs Red Bull
(Game 7)

By June Navarro

BATANG Red Bull lived to fight another day after beating Talk N Text, 86-78, and forcing a Game 7 last night in the PBA Samsung Commissioner's Cup Finals at the Philsports Arena.

Julius Nwosu rediscovered his old title-hungry self as the 6-foot-8 bruiser bounced back from a miserable Game 5 and came up with a game-high 28 points and 13 rebounds for the Thunder.

"Julius stepped up big time for us on both ends of the court. He won the game for us," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao, stressing that Nwosu is now the Thunder's leader after Tony Lang got himself unceremoniously booted out.

"Now that Tony (Lang) is gone, Julius is now our leader and he took that responsibility to heart," added Guiao.

With the series tied at 3-3, a winner-take-all tomorrow between the Phone Pals and the Thunder is set at the Big Dome.

"It will be a free-for-all on Friday. *Matira ang matibay,*" said Guiao, who is seeking his fourth PBA title in a decade.

As a pall of gloom descended on the Phone Pals camp, the shades of their 1998 Governor's Cup championship setback against Shell came into full view once more.

At that time, the Phone Pals, then Mobiline, won Game 5 but lost Games 6 and 7, becoming the last team to earn such a misfortune.

Talk N Text coach Bill Bayno is again expected to incur another round of fines after accosting acting PBA commissioner Sonny Barrios and PBA technical head Ricky Palou after the game.

Sean Lampley, who suited up for the Thunder in the Finals to replace Lang, again displayed his unusual self, finishing only 13 points and creating five crucial turnovers in 38 minutes of action.

"We're trying to buy time with Sean (Lampley). He's still groping on offense but no matter what the situation is on Friday, we'll be firing on all barrels," said Guiao.

In fact, Lampley's erratic plays in the first half allowed the Phone Pals enough elbow room to operate.

Donbel Belano, Gilbert Demape and Jerald Honeycutt made their shots from the outside as the Phone Pals' three-point shooting clicked to keep them ahead, 43-39, in the first half.

Julius Nwosu and Willie Miller carried the scoring load for the Thunder, who led 28-24 before the Phone Pals started unleashing a volley of gunfire from the trifecta territory.

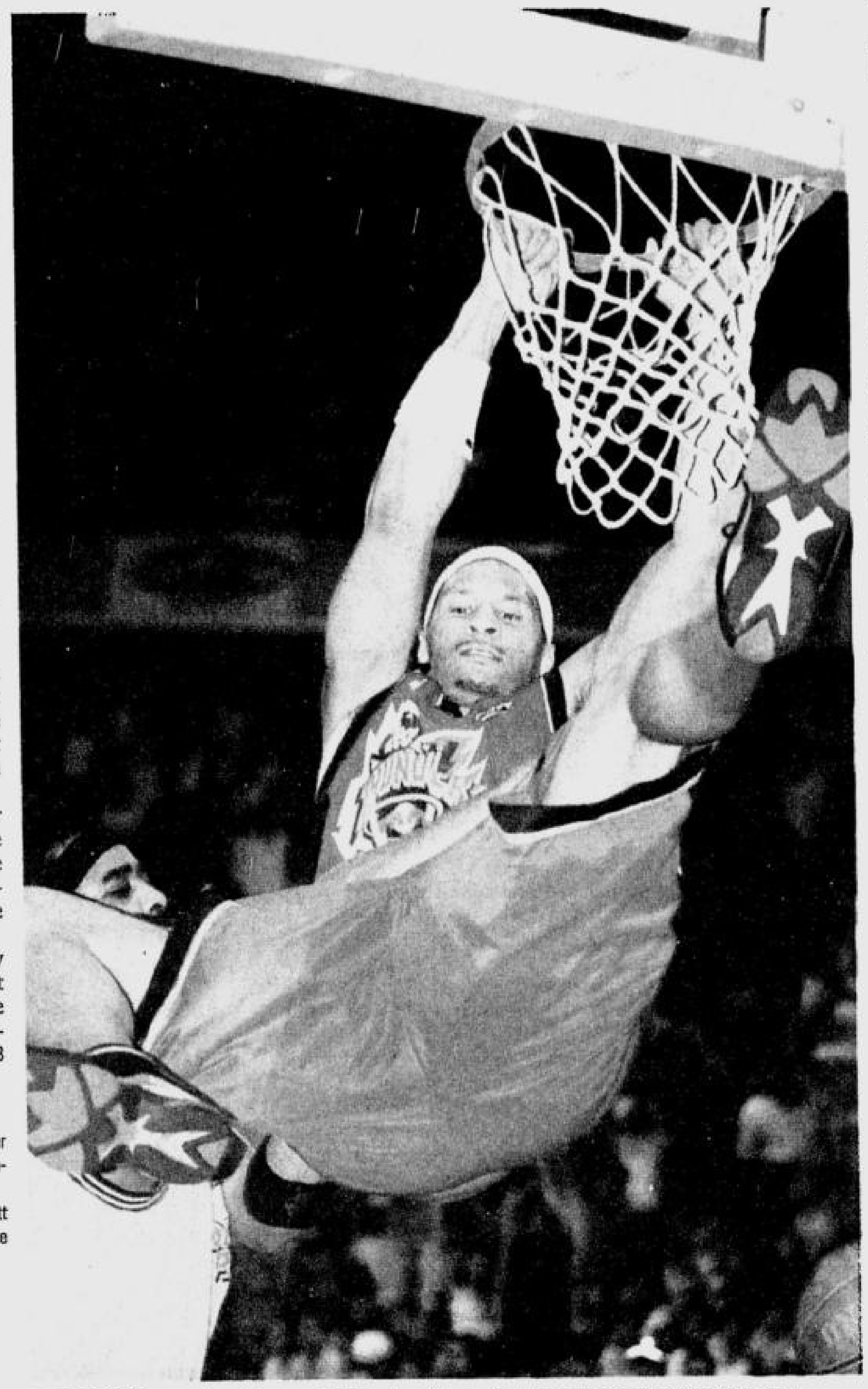
Pete Mickeal was saddled early with three personal fouls but proved to be a vital cog for the Phone Pals as he relentlessly attacked the middle to score 13 points in the first half.

Scores:

RED BULL 86—Nwosu 28, Harp 16, Miller 14, Lampley 13, Torion 6, Reyes 4, Valenzuela 3, Tugade 2, Villoria 0.

TALK N TEXT 78—Mickeal 20, Honeycutt 18, Belano 12, Telan 12, Evans 7, Demape 7, Pablo 2, Fran 2, Crisano 0.

Quarters: 16-13, 39-43, 62-62, 86-78.



DEVONN Harp makes the so-called exclamation point for Red Bull after the Thunder forward pierces the Talk N Text defenses with a dunk. Red Bull won, 86-78, to forge the winner-take-all tomorrow.

VAL HANDUMON

Regent-Shark bounces back, routs John-O

GAMES TODAY *(Pasig Sports Center)*
1 p.m.—Skygo Riders vs John-O
3 p.m.—GMC-Tortillos vs Blu All Purpose
Regent Cheese Ball-Shark vs Hapee Toothpaste

REGENT Cheese Ball-Shark dropped a 15-1 bomb in the third quarter yesterday before coasting to a 103-85 victory over John-O in the PBL-CBF Dual Meet at the Pasig Sports Complex.

Warren Ybañez led the Regent-Shark Cheese Balls with 16 points, but Gerard Ortega was a revelation with his 13 points, six rebounds and three assists.

Shark's victory was a big rebound from the 66-67 opening-day loss the Cheese Balls absorbed at the hands of Skygo.

The win forged a four-way tie in Group B among Regent-Shark, Hapee Toothpaste, Skygo and John-O with similar 1-1 cards.

Regent-Shark needs to beat Hapee today to join the crossover semifinals.

"We had a hard practice yesterday and we emphasized a new system since this is a quick tournament. I'm happy that 98 percent of our game plan was implemented," said Regent-Shark acting coach Dayong Mendoza, who temporarily replaced head coach Jing Ruiz.

Ruiz had to beg off to concentrate on his job as junior head coach of Letran in the NCAA.

John-O trailed by only a point, 49-50, 7:52 left in the third quarter.

But Ybañez, Ortega and Rysal Castro carried Regent-Shark to a 67-50 lead, 3:32 remaining.

The Cheese Balls went on to lead by as many as 22 points, 82-60, early in the final quarter.

Casino Rubbing Alcohol defeated Montaña, 80-67, for a 1-1 card in Group A.

REGENT-SHARK 103—Ybañez 16, Ortega 13, Basilides 12, Junio 12, Sotto 10, Magsumbol 10, Omolon 9, Castro 6, Epondulan 5, Sanz 5, Valdez 4, Newton 1.

JOHN-O 85—Cayabyab 18, De Ocampo 17, Calimag 12, Ferrer 11, Macapagal 6, Cruz 5, Cole 5, Olaguer 3, Salvador 3, Bat-og 3, Napa 2, Vergara 0, Kiram 0, Neo 0.

Quarterscores: 30-18, 46-43, 76-60, 103-85.

CASINO 80—Paraiso 14, Guerrero 13, Jumalon 13, Relampagos 8, Abo 6, Buenaventura 6, Celiz 6, Montalbo 4, Ursal 4, Redulosa 2, Yuson 2, Suarez 2.

MONTAÑA 67—Salvador 23, Mesina 15, Misola 14, Echavez 8, Marucot 5, David 2, Kalaw 0, Barral 0, Nidoy 0, Mendoza 0.

Quarters: 22-16, 45-35, 57-52, 80-67.

Ewing retires after 17 years, becomes Jordan asst. coach at Wizards

By Hal Bock
AP Sports Writer

EWING

NEW YORK—As Patrick Ewing talked about his retirement, there was a softness in his eyes, a relaxed look replacing the glare he used while establishing himself as one of the 50 greatest players in NBA history.

Then Ewing saw old pal Charles Oakley in the back of the room and his eyes danced. "My hit man, Oak! We had some times, didn't we, Oak?" Ewing shouted from the podium.

Indeed they did.

And for a fleeting moment Tuesday, Ewing was back under the basket with Oakley, the two battling for baskets and bounces, trying to put the New York Knicks over the top.

They never quite got there, but they had fun trying.

The 40-year-old Ewing finished his NBA career with 24,815 points and 11,606 rebounds. He'll move on to become an assistant coach for Michael Jordan and the Washington Wizards.

For 15 years, Ewing was the centerpiece of the Knicks, New York's go-to guy. There were two wrap-up seasons with Seattle and Orlando, footnotes to a career as one of the league's most dominant centers.

The 11-time All-Star holds a number of Knicks records, including leading scorer (22.8 points) and leading rebounder (10.4).

Most of the time, Oakley was right there with him.

"He came to work every day," Oakley said. "He put a lot of effort into what he wanted to do, what he wanted to accomplish."

Also attending Ewing's farewell news conference were ex-teammates Charley Ward, Allan Houston, Herb Williams and Mark Jackson.

La Salle, UE seek UAAP finals

HEAD-TO-HEAD
La Salle 81, UST 76
La Salle 91, UST 89 (overtime)

UE 97, ATENEO 96 (overtime)
UE 76, ATENEO 73

GAMES TODAY *(Araneta Coliseum)*
2 p.m.--La Salle vs UST
4 p.m.-Ateneo vs UE

By Dennis U. Eroa

IF IT can go wrong, it will go wrong.

"Five-peat" seeking La Salle and glory seeking University of the East hope that everything will turn out right when they battle equally determined foes in today's UAAP Final Four at the Araneta Coliseum.

The La Salle Green Archers, fully recovered from their 76-63 setback at the hands of the Ateneo Blue Eagles last Saturday, meet the University of Santo Tomas Tigers in the 2 p.m. opener. The Warriors tackle the Eagles at 4 p.m.

Both the Archers and the Warriors each enjoy a twice-to-beat advantage but, in the game at hand, anything can happen.

La Salle is eyeing its ninth straight finals appearance, while UE is trying to make it since losing to the Archers in the 1990 championships.

"The only difference is that they (Eagles) must beat us twice in order to make the finals. We're not going to relax because of our advantage because Ateneo is determined to win," said UE coach Boysie Zamar.

Zamar's charges beat the Eagles twice in the eliminations.

But UE will face an Ateneo squad flashing a never-say-die attitude and lifted by its huge recovery after losing three straight games early in the season.

La Salle dominated UST twice in the eliminations, including a 91-89 victory in the second round where the Archers wiped out an 18-point fourth-quarter deficit.

"Better if there'll be no more Game Two," said La Salle coach Franz Pumaren.

La Salle finished the double-round elimination with a 13-1 record, its bid for a rare 14-game sweep shattered by Ateneo.

Slotman Carlo Sharma and Manny Ramos give the Archers the edge in the middle against the Tigers, who pin their hopes on 6-foot-5 Alwyn Espiritu.

Cyrus Baguio and Niño Gelig must learn how to play under pressure, same with Christian Luanzon, who need to control his emotions in order to stabilize UST's shaky back court.

Derick Hubalde and Jemal Vizcarra can shoot from afar and if they can be consistent, the duo will pose problems for La Salle.

Playmaker Mike Cortez, hammered by Ateneo's in-your-face defense, BJ Manalo, Willy Wilson, Junjun Cabatu, Tyrone Tang, Adonis Sta. Maria and Mark Cardona banner La Salle.

The return of LA Tenorio today should work wonders for the Eagles, although they have been getting explosive performances from Cris Quimpo, Enrico Villanueva, Larry Fonacier, Wesley Gonzales, Rich Alvarez and Jec Chia.

James Yap, whose hot hands bring back memories of a young Allan Caidic, is a marked man though, leaving skipper Ronald Tubid, Arnold Booker, Paolo Hubalde and Paul Artadi with the tough task of defending the Warriors fort.

To waylay the Warriors, the Eagles must control the offensive boards, even as UE usually kills its foes with a deadly running game.

PAL EXEC WITH THE WORLD CHAMPION

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World Junior golf champion Dottie Ardina (right, left photo) seems to be getting pointers from her playing partner PAL executive vice president Henry So Uy at the Apo Golf and Country Club. Philippine Airlines hosted a weekend of top-level competition and camaraderie when it staged the 25th PAL Intersports tournament in Davao City recently. Nine teams representing the same number of cities battled each other in five events in what has become the country's largest corporate sports festival. The tournament kicked off with the Philippine Sports Commission Chair Eric Buhain hitting the ceremonial tee. Photo at extreme right shows So Uy handing the overall champion's cup to Feliciano "Nonong" Iñigo, team captain of the Bomberos de Davao athletic club, which won three events—basketball, tennis and billiards—to dethrone last year's winner Los Jefes de Cebu. Looking on are (from left) PAL's Enrique Javier, Intersports chair Domingo Duerme and officers of the winning club.

Ali's 1 of 9 kids faces shoplifting charges

TOLEDO, Ohio— A daughter of Muhammad Ali was arrested on a charge of trying to shoplift bedding from a store in Rossford, Ohio, last week.

Hana Yasmeen Ali, 26, of Berrien Springs, Michigan, was scheduled to appear in Perrysburg Municipal Court on Wednesday on a misdemeanor charge of attempted theft. She identified herself as Ali's daughter when she was arrested, officer Craig Revill said.

Employees at the store, Linens & Things also reported that she tried to tamper with a price tag on a $69.99 picture frame.

Ali, one of nine children of the former heavyweight boxing champ, wrote a book titled "More Than a Hero" about her father.

A store clerk became suspicious because bags of linens Ali was carrying felt heavy, police said. When the bags were checked, other items were found inside and the price tag on a picture frame was handwritten, the store said.

A store manager said the woman denied taking the items and left. Ali was stopped by police as she was driving away.

Jill Siegel, publicist for Ali's family, said that the family had no comment Tuesday.

Ali was kept in the Wood County jail last Thursday night and was released Friday after posting $1,500 of a $4,500 bond. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 90 days in jail and a $750 fine.

She also was charged with not having a driver's license, a misdemeanor that carries a maximum six months in jail and a $1,000 fine.

AP

Alvin bats for revival of players' group

By June Navarro

FOUR-TIME PBA MVP Alvin Patrimonio of Purefoods wants to leave a legacy after his retirement.

The Purefoods skipper, winner of numerous individual awards in the past aside from a couple of championship rings, yesterday said he would act as one of the prime movers to restore the PBA Players Association.

"Nobody else could think of reviving the players' association except us. And besides, it's for our own good," said the 35-year-old Patrimonio, the PPA's treasurer and a member of the board of trustees monitoring the players' trust fund.

Patrimonio, one of two remaining PPA officers who are still strutting their wares in the league, said he would initiate the move by convening veteran players from the 10 PBA teams and discussing the plans on which to rebuild the association.

La Salle coach Franz Pumaren, a former San Miguel Beer dribbler, was the association's president while Ramon Fernandez stood as vice president before it went into limbo.

PATRIMONIO

Tonichi Yturri, the association's executive secretary, ran the day-to-day affairs of the PPA before it became dormant. Sen. Robert Jaworski was named chair of the players' group.

"It just died a natural death. To revive it, the players must be willing to cooperate and be inclined to give their time for the association," said Patrimonio.

"I guess it's just a matter of time management. I understand majority of the players are busy but if we arrange our schedule, then we could all sit down and make it happen," he added.

Patrimonio, who still has two good years in his contract before deciding where to take his career, said changes should also be introduced to assure that everybody would do his part.

Acting PBA commissioner Sonny Barrios and PBA chair Francisco "Butch" Alejo earlier vowed to throw their support to the program of the players' association once it gets off the ground.

Barrios even advised the group to gather its members and form a committee which will be responsible for certain programs to start the ball rolling.

Jolet rules rain-hit Super Bike tourney

Overall standings:

1. J. Jao (Shell Advance-Rolex Engineering) 216 points; 2. T. Alberto 161; 3. R. Scott 133; 4. J. Andres 116; 5. R. Ortiz 90; 6. W. del Rosario 86; 7. J. Reyes 65; 8. R. Relativo 55; 9. R. Thomas 28.

ROSARIO, Batangas—Jolet Jao of Shell Advance-Rolex Engineering posted another smashing victory in the ninth-round and looked headed for another when heavy rains halted the race in the 2002 Shell Advance Super Bike Championships at the Batangas Racing Circuit here Sunday.

JAO

The mid-afternoon downpour inundated most of the 3.0-km racetrack, forcing organizers to cancel the 10th round with Jao already leading the 12-lap race.

But except for the heavy rains, nobody came close to stopping Jao's inexorable march to the overall championship this year.

"*Swerte talaga ako ngayong taon*," said the 37-year old Jao, who also bagged the overall titles in 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000 2001.

Jao will become the country's winningest rider with his sixth title in road racing.

Aside from six road racing titles, Jao also holds four motocross and three scooter championships in a long and colorful career that started in 1989.

Overall, Jao has a nine-leg aggregate of 216 points against 161 points of Toti Alberto and 133 points of Rod Scott based on the 25-20-16-13-11 scoring system by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Namssa).

Rounding out the top five riders are Jeff Andres, fourth win 116 points; and Randy Ortiz, fifth with 90 points.

Jao attributed his success to a year-round training and physical conditioning under team consultant Gregorio "Yoyong" Buncio and chief mechanic Stephen Acdul and his choice of Shell Advance's race-track tested motorcycle oils.

NCR-Air Force too much for Iloilo rivals

BACOLOD—Powerhouse NCR-Air Force routed Iloilo, 14-1, Tuesday to lead three other teams into the semifinals of the national men's football championship at the USLS filed here.

Edzel Bracamonte came up with another dazzling four-goal performance and Ziggy Tonog ably backed him up with three as the heavily favored NCR-PAF booters rolled to their third consecutive triumph.

Davao blanked Masbate, 5-0, Negros Occidental beat Cebu, 2-0, and Negros Oriental walked over Iligan, 2-0, to join NCR-PAF in the semifinals slated yesterday.

The semifinal matches of the tourney organized by the Philippine Football Federation and supported by the Philippine Sports Commission and Congressmen Monico Puentevella and Charlie Cojuangco pitted NCR-PAF against Davao and Negros Occidental against Negros Oriental.

Bracamonte, the league's leading striker with 11 goals so far, struck in the 20th, 40th, 75th and 79th minutes while Tonog connected in the 14th, 25th and 41st.

The other NCR-PAF scorers were Randy Bela-Ong (61st and 70th), Rolando Pinero (13th), Martin Doctora (52nd), Wilfredo Bermejo (73rd), Raymund Tonog (77th) and Juan Sobrevega (90th).

Lauren Bedua tallied Iloilo's lone goal in the 85th.

Evelito Mortillero led Davao's production with two goals in the 18th and 28th minutes. The other Davao markers came from Deneb Lee (38th), Herson Salmon Jr. (44th) and Jorge Valenzona (45th).

SPORTSWATCH

3 tennis tilts on tap

AFTER basketball and cycling, Alberto Lina is helping Philippine tennis by sponsoring three legs of the Philta Junior Tennis Classics through his group of companies FedEx, Airfreight 2100 and Cargo Haus and Pacific East Asia Cargo Airlines Inc. (PEAC) headed by Jojo Lontok. The three-leg tournament, to be held at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center, will start with the Cargo Haus Junior Cup slated Sept. 21-22 and Sept. 27-29. Registration is ongoing at the Philta office (tel. 525-6434). Deadline of entry is Sept. 19 at 12 noon.

Venus uninjured

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Florida—US Open runner-up Venus Williams was uninjured when the car she was riding in crashed in Florida over the weekend. The crash occurred west of Palm Beach Gardens either late Saturday night or early Sunday morning, Palm Beach County Sheriff spokesman Jay Hart said Tuesday. The crash report had not been submitted so details were limited, Hart said. No further details about the crash were available late Tuesday night. *AP*

Serena pulls thru

TOKYO—World No. 1 and top seed Serena Williams showed no signs of apathy Wednesday in a punishing 6-0, 6-2 victory over Patricia Wartusch in second round singles at the Toyota Princess Cup tennis tournament. Playing in her first singles match since defeating sister Venus in the US Open earlier this month, Williams put the 74th-ranked Wartusch away in just over one hour at Tokyo's Ariake Colosseum. *AP*

Giants trip Dodgers

LOS ANGELES—Barry Bonds hit a two-run double in a four-run second inning as the San Francisco Giants beat Los Angeles 6-4 Tuesday to take a one-game lead over the Dodgers in the National wildcard race. San Francisco, which has won eight of its past 12 games, stranded 14 runners but sent the Dodgers to their eighth loss in 11 games. Each team has 11 games left, including matchups on Wednesday and Thursday nights at Dodger Stadium. *AP*

RACING TIPS

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Race 2—1. Latin Music 2. Pampanga Queen 3. Dalia 4. Lady Attila 5. D Minnows

Race 3—1. Free Way 2. Pride of Mandau3 3. Demolition Jack 4. Ray Moon

Race 4—1. Vanicx 2. Shape of the Wind 3. Kiss Me Quick 4. Something Silver 5. Run Doding Fly

Race 5—1. Schumacher 2. Queen Matawe 3. More Love 4. Don't Tell Me 5. Carolina Belle

Race 6—1. Velocity 2. Might and Power 3. Favorite Trick 4. Kayang Kaya 5. Desert Deb

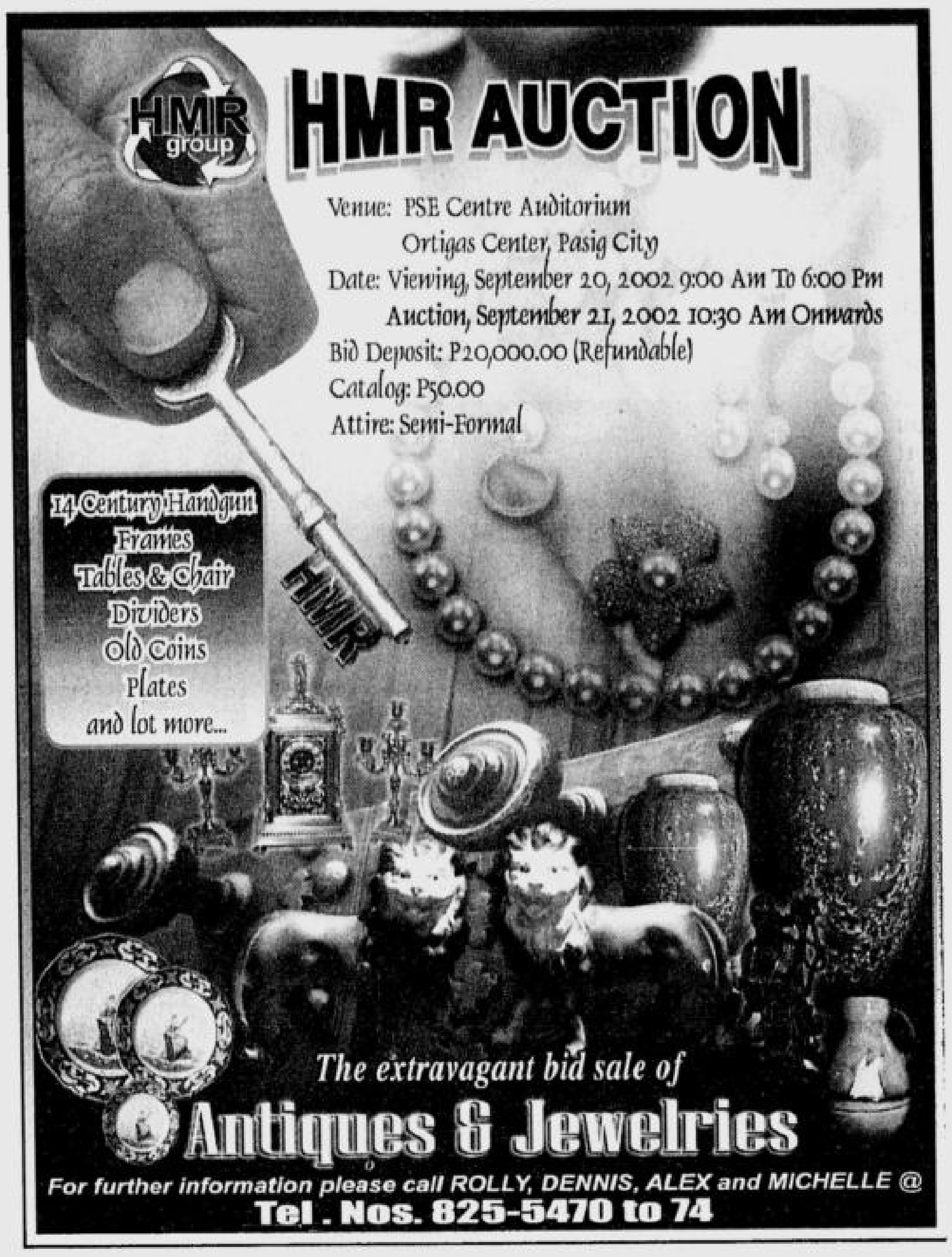
Race 7—1. Divine Diva 2. Zeus 3. Morning Nell 4. Green Buck 5. God Is Good

Race 8—1. Beat D Heat/Mister Cool 2. Ichiro 3. Dear Elane 4. Talk to Patsy 5. Sham Sham

Race 9—1. Ready Aim Fire 2. Time Essential 3. Gleaming Heart 4. Thunder Strike 5. Silver Gray 6. Howard Huge

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1990, Paulo Valdez beat Johnson Cheng, 421 to 355, to rule the PBC (Philippine Bowling Congress) Grand Masters finals at the Greenlanes. Also today in 1991, Bong Garcia downed Vangie Sia, 208-169, to win the Masters title in the 2nd SJBA Invitational Open tenpin bowling championships at the Greenlanes.



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updates

Standings

Team	W-L	Pct.
DLSU Archers	12-0	100.0
UE Warriors	9-4	69.2
ADMU Eagles	8-5	61.5
UST Tigers	7-5	58.3
FEU Tamaraws	5-7	41.6
UP Maroons	4-8	33.3
ADU Falcons	3-10	23.0
NU Bulldogs	2-11	[illegible]

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Keep in touch with the UAAP action by texting UAAP to 2366 for team standing, player statistics, and game schedules from anywhere, at anytime!

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Coronel carries Stags to victory

- Bata, Django win again /A17
- Red Bull levels series /A18
- La Salle, UE eye finals /A18
- Alvin backs players' group /A19

GAMES TOMORROW
(Rizal Coliseum)
2 p.m. Letran vs San Beda (rubber match)
3 p.m. Awarding ceremonies
4 p.m. SSC vs St. Benilde (Game 2)

By Marc Anthony Reyes

VETERAN pointguard Christian Coronel canned two free throws in the last two seconds yesterday as defending champion San Sebastian College nipped College of St. Benilde, 79-78, in Game 1 of their NCAA men's basketball best-of- three title series.

Coronel's game-clinching charities, made possible by Elvis Tolentino's undergoal hack, silenced the big, rowdy crowd that trooped from nearby St. Benilde, spilling out of the Rizal Coliseum and causing monstrous traffic jam at the corner of Vito Cruz and Taft Avenue.

"In the end, our experience prevailed," said SSC coach Turo Valenzona, whose charges still own the league's longest dynasty that stretched from 1993 to 1997. "Christian really took charge in the endgame."

The truth is, Coronel also "took over" the coaching chores from Valenzona during the Stags' final timeout with 22 seconds left while the Blazers were holding a 78-77 lead.

While Valenzona held the play board, Coronel, who also played part in the team's five-title feat in the '90s and is on his final season, was overheard yelling his teammates to wait for his signal. Valenzona was seen nodding in approval.

That signal came in the form of a seemingly kamikaze drive from the right flank which fortunately drew contact from Tolentino, who is the son of University of Manila head coach Loreto Tolentino.

Coronel fixed his footing, looked at the Stags' bench and sank the first one.

"I know there and then that those free throws could make or break our championship hopes," said Coronel. "I decided to make sure we get Game 1."

The Stags actually worked their way up from being down by as many as 11 points in the first half due to the explosive shooting of Sunday Salvacion and the inside forays of Alex Magpayo and Arnold Capati.

But the Stags leaned on Coronel, Leomar Najorda, Jam Alfad and Paul Reguera, who kept them abreast with the running-and-gunning Blazers.

Coronel's fastbreak layup in the final six minutes almost broke the game apart, giving San Sebastian a 71-67 lead but Salvacion, Magpayo and Tolentino kept St. Benilde together with an array of triples and long jumpers to set the stage for the thrilling finale.

Earlier, the Letran Squires neutralized the San Beda Red Cubs' twice-to-beat advantage with a 97-94 victory in their juniors title series. They will face each other for the rubber match tomorrow.

Scores:

SSC 79—Najorda 23, Coronel 10, Alfad 10, Reguera 10, Uy 6, Falcasantos 6, Moore 6, Baluyot 4, Vicente 3, Gonzalez 1, Legarde 0, De Leon 0.

CSB 78—Salvacion 28, Magpayo 16, Capati 11, perlas 7, Tolentino 6, Orbeta 4, Castro 4, Mendoza 2, Reyes 0, Sagad 0.

Quarters: 14-24, 41-40, 60-58, 79-78.

NAJORDA of SSC (left) battles St. Benilde's Edward Castro for the rebound during Game 1 of their NCAA championship. The Stags won, 79-78. BETOY JOHNSON

St. Scho repeats over DLS Zobel

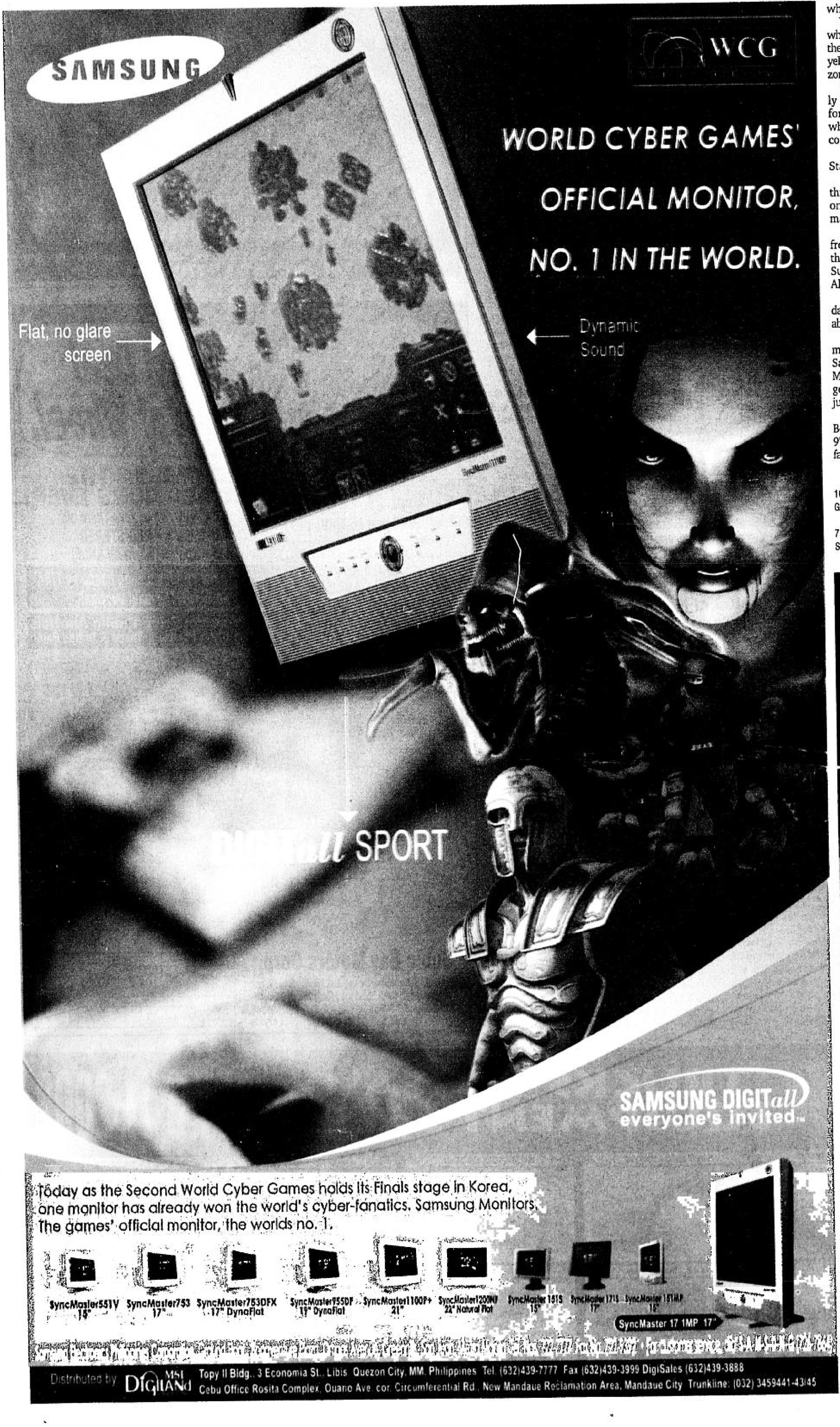
ST. Scholastica's College proved its first semifinal win was no fluke as it repeated over deposed midget champion De La Salle Zobel, 40-36, yesterday in the 33rd WNCAA-adidas basketball tournament at the Lyceum Gym.

SSC, holding a twice-to-beat edge, also won over DLSZ last Saturday, 45-39, but the latter protested the victory.

The WNCAA board and technical committee reversed the decision after finding enough merit in DLSZ's protest, which said some SSC cagers wore incomplete uniforms.

It was sweet vindication for SSC, which finished second to DLSZ last season.

SSC thus advanced to the championship against host Assumption College, which beat Miriam College, 67-46, last Saturday to grab the first finals berth.



Today as the Second World Cyber Games holds its Finals stage in Korea, one monitor has already won the world's cyber-fanatics. Samsung Monitors, the games' official monitor, the worlds no. 1.

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Makati begs for more cops

'Financial district has become target for criminals'

By Leila B. Salaverria

BINAY

A DAY after the children of Negros Occidental Rep. Jules Ledesma were released in Makati by their abductors, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay renewed his call for more police officers to be deployed in the city.

In a statement, Binay yesterday urged Philippine National Police Chief Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. to act on Makati's long-standing request for more personnel to augment the city's 478 policemen in order to combat the resurgence of kidnapping and bomb threats in the country's financial district.

Binay said the PNP's augmentation program merely replaces Makati policemen who have been transferred to other departments.

Supt. Jovito Gutierrez, Makati's Chief of Police, has ordered his men on Tuesday to be more vigilant in watching exclusive schools and shopping malls in order to prevent incidents of kidnapping from taking place.

The mayor said that with Makati being home to prominent politicians, businessmen and celebrities, it is a likely target for criminals. Only increased police visibility would serve as a crime deterrent, Binay said.

Binay also said the city's 72 foreign embassies and 380 banks need ample protection. Aside from this, the city's 450,000 residents, which swell to one million daily due to the employees who troop to their Makati offices, have to be protected as well.

Recently, the British Embassy, which holds office in Makati, was evacuated due to a bomb threat, although the bomb turned out to be a dud. A granddaughter of the Lopezes was also kidnapped in Makati while on her way to school. The child has been rescued in Cavite by operatives of the PNP. A Korean diplomat was also victimized in Makati by members of the Ativan gang, and was later found dead. The head of the Ativan gang was arrested by Makati police.

On Tuesday, Cristina and Carlo Ledesma were released in front of the Makati Medical Center four days after being abducted.

Binay said the Makati City Police have been performing well despite being short on personnel.

"For the past years, we have been able to maintain peace and order in Makati with limited law enforcers. But this should never conceal our urgent need for deployment of more men in the field," he said.

Beastly rape-slay

By Agnes E. Donato

A FIVE-YEAR-OLD girl died on Tuesday night after she was physically abused and raped by a beastly 30-year-old man in Antipolo City.

The victim lost five teeth and sustained severe injuries when she was raped on Monday night.

She expired at 7:45 p.m. the following day while undergoing treatment at the Rizal Medical Center in Pasig City.

Police said that the victim suffered from hemorrhage in the head and her bones were broken because of the blows she received from suspected assailant, Fernando Farales.

The 30-year-old suspect, an alleged drug addict, is now detained at the Antipolo City Jail. He has been charged with statutory rape with homicide, a non-bailable offense, before the Antipolo prosecutors office.

SPO1 Vic Madamba, case investigator, said that the victim's mother sent the girl to buy a bottle of softdrinks about 7 p.m. on Monday.

When the girl failed to come back home after some time, her mother decided to search for her. The mother was told at the store that her child had indeed gone there, but no one had seen the girl after she had left with the softdrinks.

Farales' arrest came after two other children, aged 14 and 12 respectively, pointed him as the victim's rapist.

The two witnesses told police that they were playing near their home when they heard a soft cry. They said that they got scared, so they called out to neighbors for help.

Afterward, they saw a half-naked man running while covering his head with a shirt.

The children said that they were able to identify the man as Farales after the suspect later took the shirt off his head.

The victim was bloodied and in critical condition when she was found by her mother and other witnesses. She died after almost 24 hours of treatment at the hospital.

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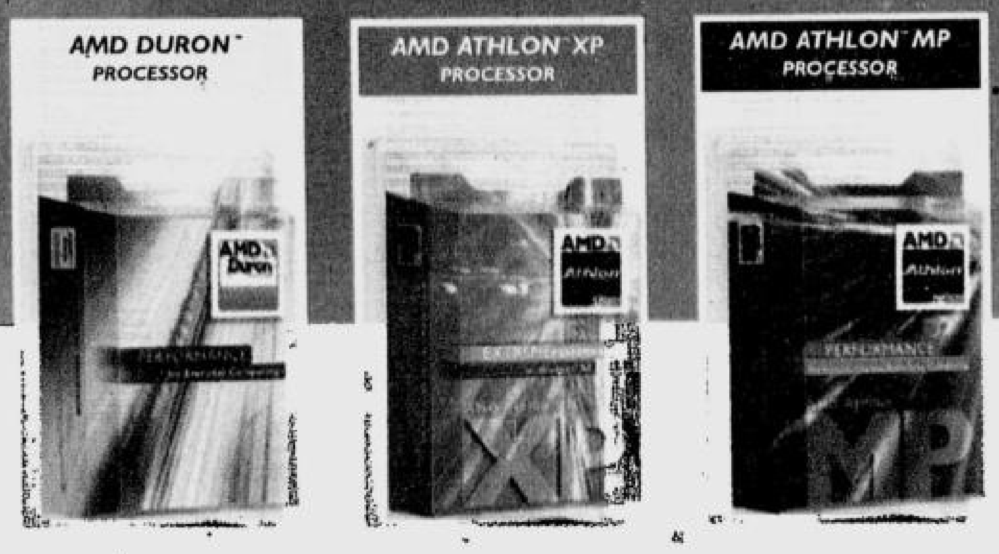

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Joecon opposes BF plan

By Leila B. Salaverria

YOU do not need to open the gates of all private subdivisions.

This was the reaction of Barangay Forbes Park Chair Jose Concepcion to Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando's statement that all private subdivisions, without exception, would need to let the public use their roads in order to ease traffic congestion.

According to Concepcion, not all villages have roads that would be beneficial to motorists. He said that in the case of Forbes Park, using its roads would not be of much help as the routes would not lessen motorists' travelling time.

"Not all subdivisions need to be opened. Maybe if the subdivision is in the way of most motorists, then their gates need to be opened," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

"But in the case of Forbes Park, I am against it. There's no justification at all."

Concepcion also reiterated yesterday that the problem of kidnapping may arise if the MMDA insists on letting the public use Forbes Park's roads. Forbes Park is home to prominent politicians, big businessmen and several embassies.

He added that homeowners in private subdivisions deserve to feel safe and secure in their subdivisions.

"The reason subdivisions came about is to provide residents with an element of security. They want to be protected from kidnapping, robbery and other crimes that's why they pay to live in subdivisions. And I'm not only referring to the class A subdivisions, but to the class B and C as well," he said, adding that the maintenance of the roads have to be taken into consideration as well.

Fernando had earlier said that if private subdivisions refuse to open their gates to the public, then the gates might as well remain permanently closed, adding that there is no such thing as a private road. The subdivision's residents must realize that "they can't be an island," he had also said.

Fernando has voiced out this plan soon after stepping in as MMDA chair. The proposal has met with opposition, but he has maintained that it is needed in order to lick the traffic problem, adding that he would ask the help of the local city councils in order to get the subdivisions to open their gates.

Councilor dismissed for lying

By Tina Santos

MALABON City lost another councilor after the Ombudsman affirmed its earlier decision dismissing Councilor Venancio Sevilla from the service for dishonesty and falsification of public/official documents.

This developed after The Ombudsman's Office of Legal Affairs approved the Administrative Adjudication Bureau's decision last June 25, 2002 denying the city lawmaker's motion for reconsideration to the Ombudman's order promulgated last March 26, 2002 dismissing him from the service.

Sevilla's dismissal stemmed from a case filed by former Councilors Rogelio Yanga (District 2) and Lucio Santos (District I).

Maribeth Taytayon-Padios of the OLA recommended the denial of Sevilla's motion questioning his dismissal by the court. The Ombudsman found sufficient grounds to dismiss Sevilla for lying and falsifying government records, the four-page memo, which was approved by Acting Ombudsman Margarito Gervasio Jr., revealed.

In their petition, Yanga and Santos alleged that Sevilla lied on two occasions when he submitted his personal data sheet (PDS) to the office of the mayor. He failed to mention that he has a pending criminal case (assault upon an agent in authority) at the Malabon Metropolitan Trial Court branch 55. He also lied when he did not mention that he already ran for public office in the city—for councilor in 1992 and 1995, and for vice mayor in 1998. He lost on all occasions.

Sevilla, for his part, denied that the lies were deliberate. He claimed that he "overlooked" those details "because of the workload in the office. He said he had to rely on his staff, Editha Mendoza, who prepared the PDS" which he allegedly signed without reading.

Vendors going to Malacañang

By Agnes Donato

BAYANI Fernando's advice may be unsolicited, but Metro Manila vendors are heeding it anyway.

The vendors yesterday said they will go to Malacañang on Friday to protest the policies of Fernando, chair of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

This came after Fernando himself urged the vendors to go to either Malacañang or the Department of Social Welfare and Development for grants.

"On Friday, we will go to Malacañang not as beggars, but to protest the kind of treatment we are getting from a public official who completely lacks a sense of social justice," said Pedring Fadrigon, chair of Metro Manila Vendors Association (MMVA).

"Fernando says we vendors do not listen. But the truth of the matter is that it's hard to listen to a Hitler like him, who makes policies the way Marcos issued his decrees and carried them out through strong-arm tactics."

Fadrigon said his group was actually ready to listen when they repeatedly called on Fernando and other local government officials for a dialogue.

The vendors' leader said the MMVA will be joining the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino and Sanlakas in the multi-sectoral protest rally on Friday marking the 30th anniversary of Martial Law.

"Fernando's strong-arm tactics against the vendors and the militarist, anti-poor and anti-labor disposition of (Macapagal-Arroyo's) strong republic are the latest testament to this administration's drift towards authoritarianism," Fadrigon said.

Don Pangan of Sanlakas stressed that his group is not "openly endorsing" City Mayor Benhur Abalos and Manila City Mayor Lito Atienza as possible replacements for Fernando.

"All we are saying is that if local government officials like Abalos and Atienza can address the vendors' problems through nonviolent means, we do not understand why Fernando could not lead in the same way," Pangan said.

Two fight uphill battle vs Bayer

By Leila Salaverria

CAPADA

FACUNDO

AFTER close to thirty years of loyal service to Bayer Philippines, electrical engineer and union president Juanito Facundo feels that all he got in return were two years of hardship and a pending labor case.

Administrative staff member and union treasurer Virginia Capada suffers the same fate. The two were former employees of Bayer, a leading German-based drug firm, and they claim they were terminated from work without prior notice and unceremoniously evicted from the office. And all because they were union leaders, they suspect.

"I was 51 when dismissed from my job," Facundo told the INQUIRER. "Who else would hire me? I could work abroad, but I would not neglect my case."

Facundo said that for the last two years, he has been hard pressed in providing for his family, especially with three of his children in college. Almost 54 now, he found it difficult to find a new job because of his age.

Facundo and Capada filed the case with the National Labor Relations Commission after they were fired from the drug firm. They both came in for work one day, and were told to report to the administrative manager, who subsequently served them their termination papers, which immediately took effect. Plainclothesmen even accompanied the two when they collected their things that same day and escorted them to waiting vans.

The drug firm cited redundancy as the reason for the complainants' dismissal.

Facundo and Capada also said they were not given prior notice and only learned about their termination on the same day.

In their complaint, Facundo and Capada claimed their positions were still needed. Facundo said in his case, a licensed electrical engineer is required for companies as mandated by law. After the termination, Facundo said the company has even advertised for an administrative supervisor who must also be a licensed engineer, and for administration staff members, which were basically the same positions he and Capada used to occupy.

The NLRC has dismissed their complaints, but the two have filed a motion for reconsideration. In their motion, the two said their dismissal was union related, as they believe they are being discriminated against for testifying in an unfair labor practice case against the company's officers and for leading a 1997 strike against the company.

Facundo also told the INQUIRER that he had felt being harassed after he was assigned to do odd jobs and transferred from one office to another.

Ever since the union went on strike in 1997, Facundo said he had been under intense pressure. Yet he did not leave, he said, because he had done nothing wrong and had been loyal to Bayer.

The 53-year-old Capada, on her part, found it hard to believe she was terminated so quickly and for such a flimsy reason. She believed her being the union treasurer had something to do with it. She said she now carries the burden of meeting her financial obligations while spending for her breast cancer medication.

Now, two years after being fired, the former union leaders are trying to get the proper compensation that should be accorded to employees who have served the company for as long as they have. The amount is also being disputed in their labor case, and the two fear that a long wait is before them.

Ledesma kidnapping: too 'showbizzy'

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE PERSONS behind the abduction of the children of Negros Occidental Rep. Jules Ledesma IV are no ordinary kidnappers.

Up until the kidnapping of Ledesma's children, kidnappers only touched the relatives of wealthy businessmen, mostly Filipino-Chinese. They kept their hands off close relatives of government officials.

Professional or ordinary kidnappers would not want a ruckus accompanying their deed. They would want quiet negotiations with the victim's relatives. They would want to avoid the risk of being caught by the police who are working under pressure from an enraged public.

* * *

The kidnapping of the wealthy congressman's children was such a high profile adventure it invites many questions.

Was it really for the big buck, or was it meant to insult the Philippine National Police chief Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. who has been doing an excellent job in busting kidnap-for-ransom gangs?

How much ransom money was paid, if any?

How come the children were released in a public place near the Makati Medical Center when they could have been dropped off in a secluded area?

* * *

If you ask this writer, the kidnapping drama was too dramatic to be real. From the snatching of the children to their release, all the elements of a cinematic drama are present.

It had too much drama in it. A movie reporter in a tabloid would perhaps describe it as "parang show biz."

Jules Ledesma's possible guesting at ABS-CBN's Private Conversation with Boy Abunda talk show program is now being awaited by millions of followers. Of course, Ledesma's children might even be on the show along with their future (?) stepmother, actress Assunta di Rossi.

However, I hasten to add that PNP's Ebdane believes that the kidnapping was not contrived. "Totoo, Mon," he said. He would not elaborate.

And I believe Ebdane.

* * *

The immigration officer at the Laoag City airport who allegedly extorted money from an Indian couple from Hong Kong recently was not named Ablan but a certain Abellon.

The Ablan mentioned here mentioned on Sept. 17 was Roven Ablan, son of Ilocos Norte Rep. Roque Ablan, who took care of the needs of the Indian couple and other passengers from Hong Kong. The young Ablan owns the tour company that booked the Hong Kong passengers' trip to Laoag City.

The young Ablan, a source in Laoag said, handed the P3,000 from the Indian couple to Abellon.

* * *

My source said the P3,000 represented "escort fee" to Abellon for accompanying the couple to the plane that took them back to Hong Kong.

The couple, Magdoom Thamry and Mariam Fathima Fiaz, went to Laoag to play golf upon the invitation of the Philippine Consul General in Hong Kong, Domingo Lucenario Jr.

Lucenario could not attend the golf game, so the couple went to Laoag on their own. It was then that problems started for the Fiazes.

* * *

Their passports were kept by the immigration people for the duration of their short stay in Laoag. This is illegal.

When the husband asked an immigration official why they were being treated shabbily, the official allegedly shoved him and screamed at him.

And to top it all, they were made to pay P3,000 "escort fee."

All the efforts of Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon to invite tourists to our shores are put to waste because of incidents like the one at the Laoag City airport.

* * *

A bill pending in the Senate that seeks to impose stiff penalties for drunk driving will surely, if it is passed, bring down the rate of accidents on our roads and highways.

The proposed law, sponsored by Sen. Manuel Villar, would penalize persons caught driving while drunk or "high" on drugs with a one-year suspension and a fine of P1,000. For second offenders, the penalty would be five-year suspension and a fine of P5,000.

Never mind the fine of P5,000 or P1,000! The suspension of one year for the first offense and five years for the second offense would be a big deterrent to drunk driving.

P700M in fake perfume seized

By Philip Tubeza

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) the other day confiscated P700 million worth of fake Chanel perfumes in a raid in Taguig, Metro Manila.

Agents of the NBI's Intellectual Property Rights Division raided a warehouse near Maharlika Village, Taguig, which yielded what they claimed to be 225,000 bottles of imitation perfume.

Some 175,000 of these were fake Chanel perfumes, NBI agents said.

According to the bureau's initial investigation, a Wilson Tan and a Hajji Nur are serving as "front men" for the syndicate.

The group allegedly sold the perfume bottles in Greenhills, San Juan for P250.

It is worth P3,000 to P4,000 at the department store of Rustan's, the exclusive marketer of Chanel perfumes in the country.

La Mesa Dam oveflows; safety assured

MAYNILAD Water announced that the La Mesa Dam has overflowed as water breached the 80.15-meter spillage level due to constant heavy rains. As of 8:00 a.m. yesterday, the water at the dam reached 80.17 meters.

"However, there is no cause for alarm as the rise in the level of the Tullahan river has been gradual and minimal," Maynilad's water production manager Edgardo Esteban said.

La Mesa Dam's overflow goes to the Tullahan River which passes through Quezon City, Valenzuela and Malabon.

"All the residents have already been informed, through their barangay chairmen as well as the Red Cross, City Hall, and the NDCC," Esteban said.

Maynilad's Engineer Salvador Leyble, head of the Technical Support Services section of the Common Purpose Facility, who also monitors La Mesa Dam, said that "the increase in the water level is only gradual and would not affect the residents.

And at the rate of the overflow, only the level of water at the Tullahan River will rise without affecting the houses of the residents living along the riverside, Leyble added.

La Mesa Dam last overflowed in July 2000 when its level reached a record high of 80.39 meters necessitating the evacuation of residents leaving along the riverside and other nearby low-lying areas.

For regular updates on La Mesa Dam water level, call the La Mesa Common Purpose Facility at telephone number 939-7477 or the Maynilad Call Center Hotline at 1626.

METROBRIEFS

Slain in Navotas

FACTORY worker Henry Sarino, 19, of North Bay Boulevard in Navotas died on Tuesday night after she was shot in the chest by two former friends over an old grudge. One of the suspects, Jojo Pamplona, 22, was arrested, but the other is still at large. Investigation showed Sarino was walking along Road 10 about 9 p.m. when the suspects appeared from a dark alley. Officer-on-case PO3 Eric Roxas said one of the suspects then shot Sarino once then fled. But police managed to apprehend Pamplona after a brief chase.

Tina Santos

Banned in public

DRINKING alcoholic drinks in all public places in Navotas has been banned after the town's municipal council approved Ordinance No. 2002-06. The lawmakers said alcohol leads to drunken brawls and criminal acts. The ordinance imposes a P500 fine on first time offenders, P1,000 and five days in jail on the second offense, and P1,500 and a jail term to be fixed by the court for the third offense. Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco said he welcomed the ordinance, adding that it would help maintain the peace in Navotas. But the ban will be lifted during regular holidays-Dec. 24, 25, 31 and Jan. 1—and during the town fiesta.

Killed in QC

QUEZON CITY police have yet to determine why John John Evangelista, 28, was shot dead on Tuesday in Quezon City. Evangelista, of 6 Mayflower St., Novaliches, Quezon City was killed at 6:45 p.m. inside his gray Kia Pride while it was travelling along Mindanao Avenue in Barangay Talipapa. Police said the suspect was also on board Evangelista's car. Residents and bystanders told police that they heard two gunshots the vehicle and discovered that a man had been shot. They told police that another man with blood on his clothes was also inside the car, but he fled from the scene.

Alcuin Papa

GANITO ANG S
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MEN NG NEDA

ROTTEN DEAL

DRAMATIZING their disgust over the government's liberalization of foreign trade policies, labor and farmers' groups dump rotting vegetables in front of the office of the National Economic and Development Authority at Ortigas Center in Pasig City.

JOAN BONDOC

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2 JOLOGS
3 TUKAAN
4 (SDDS) REIGN OF FIRE
5 VOODOO
6 (DOLBY) ROAD TO PERDITION
7 (DTS) VAN WILDER
8 LEFT BEHIND
9 BAKAT

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0082
4 LAMAN
5 (SDDS) REIGN OF FIRE
6 (DTS) ROAD TO PERDITION
7 (DOLBY) VAN WILDER
8 TUKAAN

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795
1 TUKAAN
2 VOODOO
3 (DTS) ROAD TO PERDITION
4 LAMAN
5 (SDDS) REIGN OF FIRE

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470
1 TUKAAN

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888
1 TUKAAN

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson LAMAN
Lords APOY SA MAGDAMAG
Jennet RESERVE

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 ROAD TO PERDITION
2 TUKAAN
3 VOODOO

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238
1 (DOLBY) REIGN OF FIRE
2 ROAD TO PERDITION
3 LEFT BEHIND THE MOVIE
4 LAMAN
5 TUKAAN

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)
1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879,2029
1 JOLOGS
2 GAMITAN

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta
MALL CINEPLEX 7
tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242/8400
1 JOLOGS
2 LAMAN
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) ROAD TO PERDITION
4 (SDDS) REIGN OF FIRE
5 (DTS) VOODOO
6 BOURNE IDENTITY
7 VAN WILDER

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242/8400
1 TUKAAN
2 REIGN OF FIRE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198
1 BIGLANG LIKO
2 DERAILED
3 (DTS) REIGN OF FIRE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.:983
1 INSOMNIA
2 (DTS) ROOKIE
3 (DOLBY) REIGN OF FIRE
4 DERAILED

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 INSOMNIA
2 (DOLBY) REIGN OF FIRE
3 (DTS) DERAILED
4 ROOKIE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 JOLOGS
2 LAMAN
3 BOURNE IDENTITY
4

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729
1 AUSTIN POWER
2 SIGNS
3 (DOLBY) HIGH RISK
4 (DTS) SPIRIT

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305
1 AUSTIN POWER
2 HIGH RISK
3 BAKAT

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1
2 KAMA SUTRA
3 STRIP SHOW
4 LEFT BEHIND THE MOVIE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) REIGN OF FIRE
2 DIVINE SECRETS.
3 (DTS) DERAILED
4 INSOMNIA
5 LAMAN

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 LAMAN
2 DERAILED
3 SAGAD

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 REIGN OF FIRE
2 DERAILED
3 SAGAD

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3233
1 LAMAN
2 DERAILED
3 INSOMNIA
4 BOURNE IDENTITY

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808
1 (DTS) LAMAN
2 (DTS)

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 LAMAN
2 SIGNS
3 MORE ANTS IN THE PANTS

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 LAMAN
2 DIVINE SECRETS
3 BOURNE IDENTITY
4 HIGH RISK

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY) ROAD TO PERDITION
2 LAMAN
3 (DTS) REIGN OF FIRE
4 SIMONE

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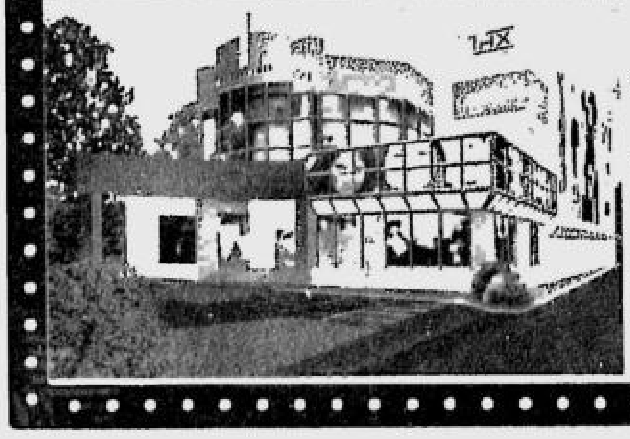
ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS



PREMIERE CINEMA NOW SHOWING
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ROAD TO PERDITION

SM CINEMA
SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 633-9999
NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173868
1 ROAD TO PERDITION
2 LEFT BEHIND
3 REIGN OF FIRE
4 VOODOO
5 REVELATION
6 JOLOGS
7 TUKAAN
8 VAN WILDER

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416
1 VAN WILDER
2 TUKAAN
3 ROAD TO PERDITION
4 LEFT BEHIND
5 REIGN OF FIRE
6 JOLOGS
7 REVELATION
8 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
9 SPIDER
10 VOODOO

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749
1 LEFT BEHIND
2 BOURNE IDENTITY
3 JOLOGS
4 ROAD TO PERDITION
5 VAN WILDER
6 VOODOO
7 REIGN OF FIRE
8 REVELATION
9 HIGH RISK
10 TRIPLE X
11 LAMAN
12 TUKAAN

SM CITY MANILA
5239240
1 ROAD TO PERDITION
2 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
3 VAN WILDER
4 REVELATION
5 SPIDER
6 REIGN OF FIRE
7 VOODOO
8 LEFT BEHIND
9 JOLOGS
10 HIGH RISK
11 SIMONE
12 TUKAAN

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401
1 SIMONE
2 VAN WILDER
3 ROAD TO PERDITION
4 REVELATION
5 LEFT BEHIND
6 SPIDER
7 VOODOO
8 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
9 JOLOGS
10 REIGN OF FIRE
11 TUKAAN
12 HIGH RISK

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452
1 REVELATION
2 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
3 TUKAAN
4 JOLOGS
5 VAN WILDER
6 SPIDER
7 ROAD TO PERDITION
8 REIGN OF FIRE

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888
1 VOODOO
2 SPIDER
3 ROAD TO PERDITION
4 VAN WILDER
5 REVELATION
6 JOLOGS
7 LEFT BEHIND
8 REIGN OF FIRE
9 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
10 TUKAAN

SM CITY CEBU
2313876
1 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
2 AUSTIN POWERS
3 ROAD TO PERDITION
4 INSOMNIA
5 HUMAN EATER
6 DERAILED
7 SIGNS
8 HIGH RISK

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422
1 BAKAT
2 CLOSED
3 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
4 DERAILED
5 SIGNS
6 AUSTIN POWERS
7 CLOSED
8 HUMAN EATER

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015
1 REIGN OF FIRE
2 ROAD TO PERDITION
3 SEX & ZEN
4 TUKAAN
5 SIMONE
6 JOLOGS

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975
1 TUKAAN
2 REIGN OF FIRE
3 ROAD TO PERDITION
4 VAN WILDER

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302
1 ROAD TO PERDITION
2 TUKAAN
3 LEFT BEHIND
4 VAN WILDER

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998
1 AUSTIN POWERS
2 DERAILED
3 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
4 BAKAT
5 HIGH RISK
6 SIGNS

SM BICUTAN
1
2
3
4
SOON TO OPEN! 4 NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART VISION & SOUND

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1
2
3
4
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633-8976
1 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2 ROAD TO PERDITION
11:15 FS/11:45 MF/2:00/4:15/6:30/8:45/
10:40 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:55 END

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1 THX ROAD TO PERDITION
11:10MF 1:45 4:20
6:55 9:30LMF 11:33END
2 VAN WILDER
3 BOURNE IDENTITY
4 VOODOO
5 ROAD TO PERDITION
6 REIGN OF FIRE
7 SIMONE
8 KWENTONG KAYUMANGGI ANIMATION FESTIVAL
9 KWENTONG KAYUMANGGI ANIMATION FESTIVAL (AM)/SPIDER (PM)
10 LEFT BEHIND

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Ermita
536 -7809- 12
1 ROAD TO PERDITION
2 REIGN OF FIRE
3 SPIDER
4 REVELATION
5 VOODOO
6 SIMONE
7 VAN WILDER

Metro East - Marcos hway
682- 8193 / 8280
1 LEFT BEHIND
2 REIGN OF FIRE
3 VAN WILDER
4 BOURNE IDENTITY
5 VOODOO
6 SIMONE
7 ROAD TO PERDITION
8 TUKAAN

Novaliches
935- 3229 - 30
1 REIGN OF FIRE
2 BOURNE IDENTITY
3 ROAD TO PERDITION
4 LEFT BEHIND
5 VAN WILDER
6 SIMONE
7 VOODOO
8 REVELATION

Imus
471- 8188 / 875- 3838
1 REIGN OF FIRE
2 LEFT BEHIND
3 VAN WILDER
4 ROAD TO PERDITION
5 VOODOO
6 TUKAAN

Bacolod
441- 0453 / 0459
1 AUSTIN POWERS 3
2 UNFAITHFUL
3 SIGNS
4 LAMAN
5 MORE ANTS IN THE PANTS
6 SEX & ZEN

Iloilo
336- 8077 - 78
1 AUSTIN POWERS 3
2 SIGNS
3 HIGH EXPLOSIVE
4 DERAILED
5 BAKAT
6 BOURNE IDENTITY

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp.
875- 1927
961- 5318 / 5270
1 REIGN OF FIRE
2 ROAD TO PERDITION
3 SIMONE
4 SEX & ZEN
5 TUKAAN
6 ROAD TO PERDITION

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Novaliches : NOVA
Imus : IMUS
Starmills : STAR
Iloilo : ILO
Bacolod : BAC

Send to : 2333 Globe / 225 Smart

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Sandler, Eastwood and Witherspoon in new films

From page A25

of classical and Philippine music pieces.

The beneficiary is the Young Artists Exchange Program, MCO's developing arm for young musicians. Call the MCO Foundation secretariat at 818-1403.

Quiz-show errors

THE SEX Bomb Dancers recently competed on "The Weakest Link"—and bombed big time. Their funniest booboos:

Quizmaster: *Ano ang ibig sabihin ng* UMD?
Contestant: Uh—University of Mega Dance?
(No, Universal Motion Dancers!)

* * *

Quizmaster: *Ano ang kulay ng kesong puti?*
Contestant: Ah—*pula?*
(No, *puti nga, e!*)

* * *

Quizmaster: *Ilan ang paa ng palaka?*
Contestant: *Dalawa.*
(*Palaka, hindi tao.* The correct answer is *apat.*)

* * *

Quizmaster: *Ilang araw sa isang* novena?
Contestants: *Isa.*
(No, *siyam!*)

* * *

Quizmaster: *Sino ang gumanap ng role ni* Hannibal Lecter *sa* "Silence of the Lambs"?
Contestant: Helen Hunt!
(No, Anthony Hopkins!)

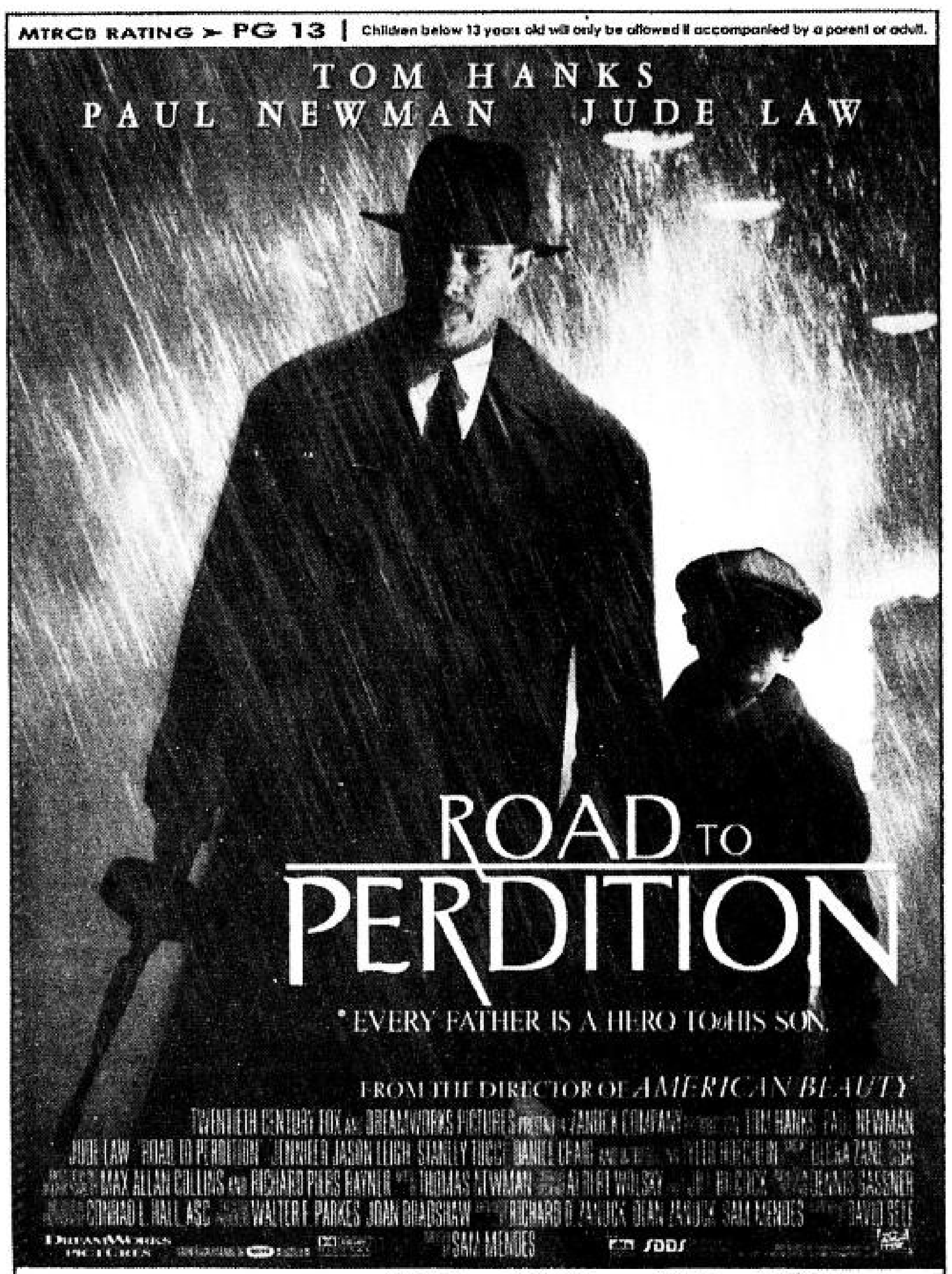
* * *

Quizmaster: *Sino ang asawa ni* Maria?
Contestant: Mary?
(No, Joseph!)

* * *

Quizmaster: *Ilang gabi naganap ang* "A Thousand and One Nights"?
Contestant: *Isa.*
(No, 1,001!)

MTRCB RATING ➤ PG 13 | Children below 13 years old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.


TOM HANKS
PAUL NEWMAN JUDE LAW
ROAD TO PERDITION
EVERY FATHER IS A HERO TO HIS SON.
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN BEAUTY
TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX AND DREAMWORKS PICTURES PRESENT A ZANUCK COMPANY PRODUCTION TOM HANKS PAUL NEWMAN
JUDE LAW "ROAD TO PERDITION" JENNIFER JASON LEIGH STANLEY TUCCI DANIEL CRAIG
MAX ALLAN COLLINS AND RICHARD PIERS RAYNER THOMAS NEWMAN ALBERT WOLSKY DENNIS GASSNER
CONRAD L. HALL, ASC WALTER F. PARKES JOAN BRADSHAW RICHARD D. ZANUCK DEAN ZANUCK SAM MENDES DAVID SELF
SAM MENDES
DREAMWORKS PICTURES
SDDS

Special thanks to WAVE 89.1 · 88.3 · 92.3

OPENING SEPTEMBER 18
NOW SHOWING!

ArtFilm Greenbelt 1

AYALA CINEMAS

The 4th Israeli Film Festival

The Policeman PG-13 (Sept. 19, 9:30 PM / Sept 20, 11:30 AM / Sept. 22, 2 PM / Sept. 23, 7 PM) A tale about the misadventures of an aging, good-hearted Tel Aviv policeman. On the eve of his retirement, frustrated cop Avram Azoulay encounters religious zealots, comes to the aid of a prostitute, and unwittingly solves a crime staged for his benefit.

Yana's Friends R-18 (Sept 20, 9:30 PM / Sept. 21, 2 PM / Sept. 22, 4:30 PM / Sept. 25, 9:30 PM) Yana – a young, beautiful, and pregnant immigrant from Russia, arrives in Tel Aviv and is threatened by poison-gas missile attacks, without her husband by her side. She is forced to seek shelter in the only sealed room in the house, in close contact with her irresistibly charming roommate Eli.

Clean Sweep R-18 (Sept 19, 2 PM / Sept. 21, 4:30 PM / Sept. 22, 9:30 PM / Sept. 24, 7 PM) Aya, a good looking and yet tough police agent, is sent to nail down Patrick – a notorious Mafia boss, around the same time her romantic relationship with Commander Reuven breaks down. When she finds out that Reuven is ready to "sacrifice her" to nail the elusive Patrick, everything becomes possible.

Kippur R-18 (Sept 19, 4:30 PM / Sept. 21, 7 PM / Sept. 23, 9:30 PM / Sept. 25, 2 PM) October 6, 1973, it's Yom Kippur. When war breaks out, Weinraub and his friend Kantoni head north and eventually joins an air force rescue team. The helicopter makes repeated trips to and from the combat zone. On a mission, the machine is hit by a missile, and crashes. The war is over for them…

Total Love R-18 (Sept 20, 7 PM / Sept. 22, 11:30 PM / Sept. 23, 2 PM / Sept. 25, 7 PM) The story of "one fine girl," whose three ex lovers join forces to rescue her from an Indian prison. But even if they do save the love of their life, only time will tell which one of them she will choose.

Don't Give a Damn R-18 (Sept 20, 2 PM / Sept. 22, 7 PM / Sept. 23, 4:30 PM / Sept. 24, 7 PM) The power of love unfolds when Rafi, a young soldier, is wounded in battle and returns home. As he falls deeper into despair, he finally finds himself choosing between a life of bitterness, and one of love and hope.

Growing Pains R-18 (Sept.19, 7 PM / Sept. 21, 11:30 PM / Sept. 24, 2 PM) Doron, a delivery boy in the supermarket, falls in love with Susie – who not only comes from a wealthy family, but also has a boyfriend. To impress Susie, the young man illegally gains access to a private house, and organizes a party. When the object of his affection stumbles into his secret, Doron's shame leads him to distance himself from Susie, who is now unable to forget him.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SUGAT / FERDINANDO
ODEON	ROAD TO PERDITION
ODEON-2	JASON X / TAMPISAW
ROBEN	TUKAAN
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	STARWARS / BIG FAT LIAR
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET-2	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
QUEZON-1	BAKAT
REMAR	TUKAAN
REMAR-2	BAKAT
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	TUKAAN
B	
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	REIGN OF FIRE
CINEMA-2	ROAD TO PERDITION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	LAMAN
CINEMA-2	TUKAAN
CINEMA-3	JOLOGS
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BOURNE IDENTITY
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	GAMITAN
CINEMA-6	XXX
CINEMA-7	YOUNG VIRGINS
CINEMA-8	SIMONE
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	REIGN OF FIRE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ROAD TO PERDITION
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	REVELATION
CINEMA-12	VOODOO
CINEMA-14	VAN WILDER
CINEMA-15	LEFT BEHIND THE MOVIE
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

DIVINE SECRET OF YA-YA SISTERHOOD **P-13** 12:10,2:30,4:50, 7:10,9:30	**BOURNE IDENTITY** **P13** 12:00,2:20,4:40, 7:10,9:40	**SIMONE** **P13** 12:30,2:50,5:10, 7:30,9:50
REIGN OF FIRE **P13** 11:50,1:50,3:50, 5:50,7:55,10:00	**VAN WILDER** **P13** 12:55,3:05,5:15, 7:25,9:35	**ROAD TO PERDITION** **P13** 11:50,2:25,5:00, 7:35,10:10

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CINEMA 1
REIGN OF FIRE
11:00, 1:10, 3:20,
5:30, 7:50
P 13

CINEMA 2
ROAD TO PERDITION
11:30, 2:05, 4:40,
7:15, 9:50
P 13

All Reserved Seating: P120.00

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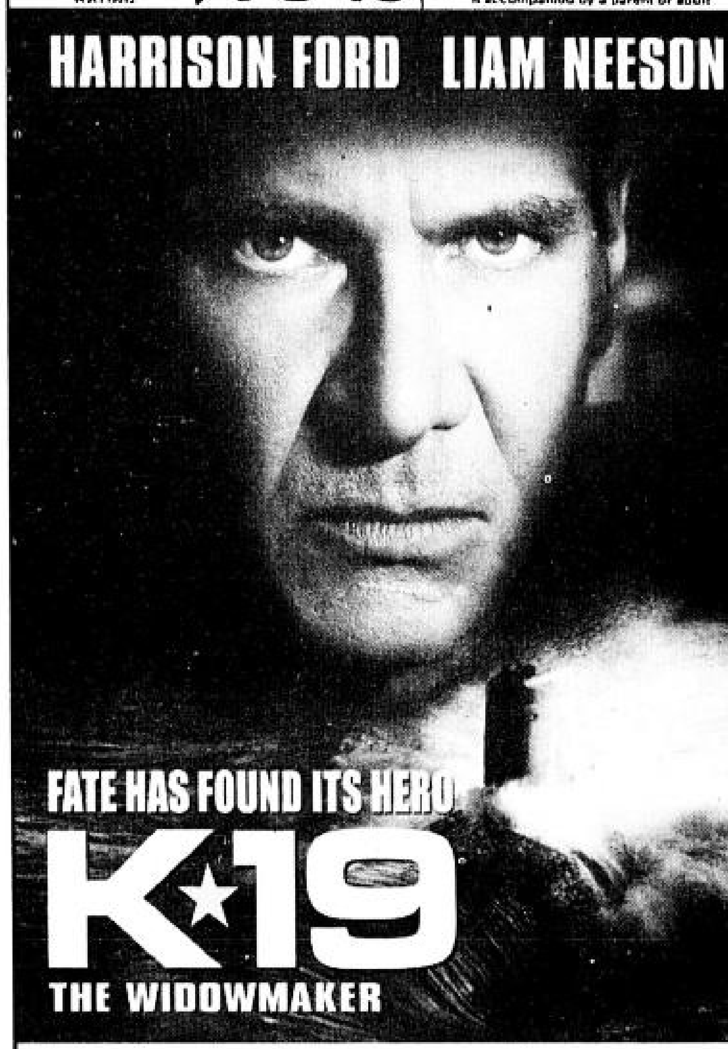
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

HARRISON FORD LIAM NEESON


FATE HAS FOUND ITS HERO
K★19
THE WIDOWMAKER

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SEPTEMBER 25

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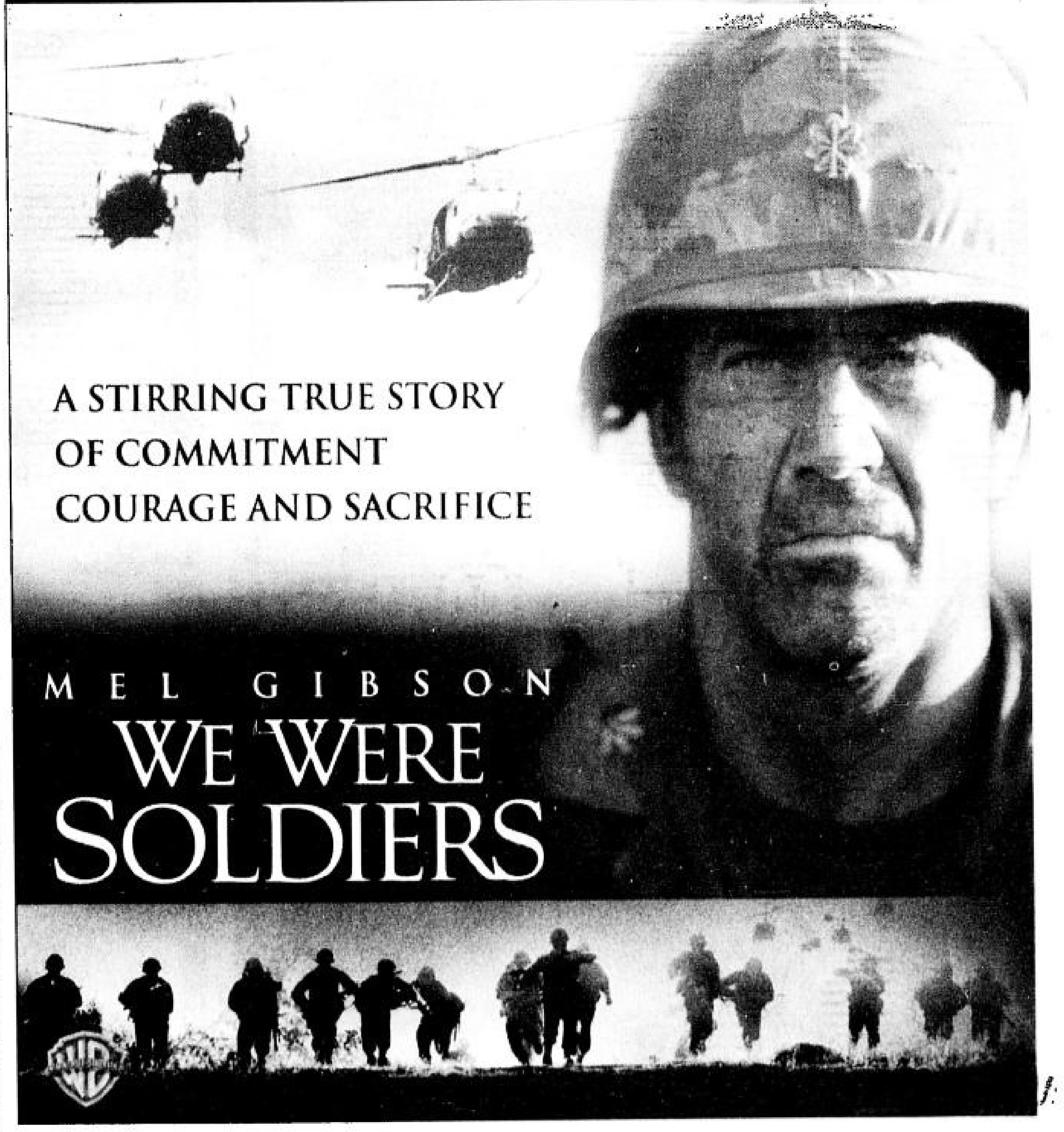

A STIRRING TRUE STORY
OF COMMITMENT
COURAGE AND SACRIFICE
MEL GIBSON
WE WERE
SOLDIERS

'Laman' without substance

By Rey G. Vicente,
Contributor

REVIEW

"LAMAN" is the Filipino equivalent of "flesh" as in sex. But it also means content, or substance.

"Laman" the movie is about one woman's awakening to the complex mysteries of sexuality and her introduction to the intoxicating wonders of sin. It follows the young couple Dongdong and Lolit who move from the province to Manila in search of their place in the sun.

Omar (Albert Martinez) accommodates them in his dilapidated rented house in Quezon City. Omar's girlfriend is Nipsie, played to distraction by Elizabeth Oropesa, who in turn has a Japanese benefactor who gives her the money to put up a videoke bar and a *lechon*-shop. She is a horny bad girl gone good in business.

Omar helps Dongdong to be employed in Nipsie's lechon shop, and he recommends Lolit to work in a friend's small garment shop. Dongdong and Lolit are grateful, but Omar's motive for helping them soon becomes apparent.

No-no

There should be a law prohibiting anyone from depicting the poor or the less privileged as stupid, unprincipled or morose. What kind of man would agree to share his wife with another man? Must all three be depicted together in bed, with the two men having sex with the same woman at the same time?

Even in a menage a trois (a relationship involving three consenting adults) in French films, three in a bed is a no-no. How much more in a relatively conservative country like the Philippines, where such things are only whispered about?

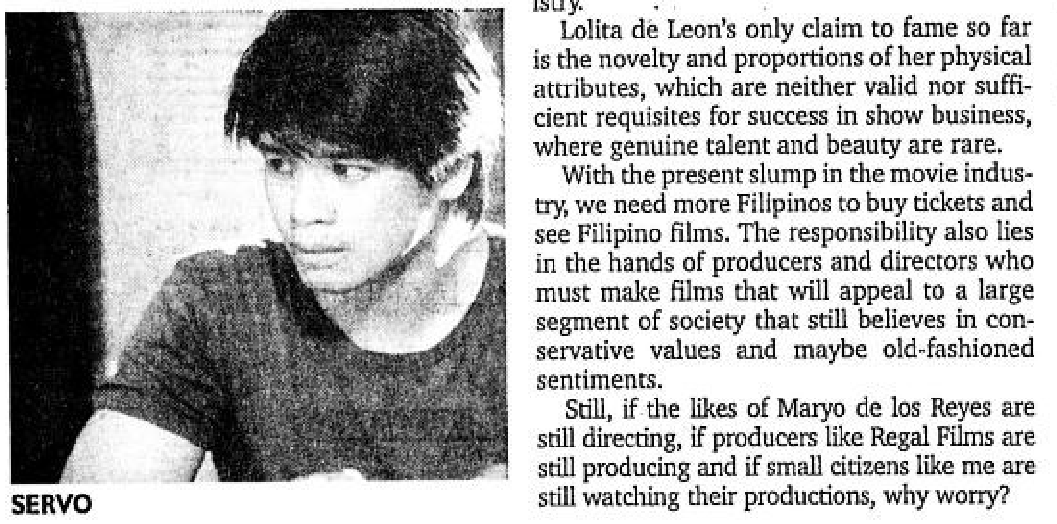
Scenes that should throb with the excitement and urgency of a forbidden liaison never materialize. Tasteful artistic imagery to evoke the hunger and fear of the illicit lovers is not used to advantage. The impending doom is not felt.

Rushing

Not even for one insane moment is the viewer made to feel the gravity and moral consequences of the acts being committed on screen. You are taken on a dangerous trip of marital infidelity but you never quite reach the edge where you might fall. You feel cheated, uncertain, unfulfilled, waiting for punishment that never comes.

Throughout the film, I had the strange feeling that the characters somehow were inordinately rushing—merely mouthing their lines on cue and acting out their roles so that they could go on to the next scene—at the expense of plausibility. It was as though the movie makers were overly cautious not to exceed certain limitations imposed by an agency that has the power to obliterate any attempt at expressing artistic freedom.

The effects of such unreasonable restrictions become evident in the movie's lack of free-flowing narrative and humorous ironies that should have made the story realistic, not contrived.


SERVO

Questions

The bathroom where the first sex encounter takes places has a door but no lock or any devise to keep it closed.

During closeups of the sexual protagonists in the claustrophobic bathroom, the woman hardly registers a believable degree of eroticism.

Is it normal for a woman like Lolit—whose moral values, if she has any, are questionable—to take a bath with her chemise and panties on?

I may not be an expert cook, but wouldn't the coconut milk in the *ginataang alimasag*curdle with Lolit's addition of acid (muriatic) to poison Omar, Nipsie and Dongdong?

Poor chemistry

Yul Servo, as the pathetic husband Dongdong, is quite disappointing. After winning a best actor award for his performance in Lav Diaz's "Batang West Side," I expected him take on more challenging roles.

The virile and talented Martinez is not effective as Omar in his scenes with Lolit, the randy housewife. Blame it on poor chemistry.

Lolita de Leon's only claim to fame so far is the novelty and proportions of her physical attributes, which are neither valid nor sufficient requisites for success in show business, where genuine talent and beauty are rare.

With the present slump in the movie industry, we need more Filipinos to buy tickets and see Filipino films. The responsibility also lies in the hands of producers and directors who must make films that will appeal to a large segment of society that still believes in conservative values and maybe old-fashioned sentiments.

Still, if the likes of Maryo de los Reyes are still directing, if producers like Regal Films are still producing and if small citizens like me are still watching their productions, why worry?

NOVELTY. Lolita de Leon

Sandler, Eastwood and Witherspoon in new films

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

COMEDIAN **Adam Sandler** strengthens his Everyman image with his latest starrer, "Mr. Deeds," a new version of "Mr. Deed Goes to Town," starring **Gary Cooper** and directed by **Frank Capra**. The film vivifies many people's dream of striking it rich someday.

Sandler plays Longfellow Deeds, a lovable guy who runs a small pizzeria and writes offbeat greeting-card "poetry." His simple life is suddenly turned on its ear when he is informed that a long-lost relative has left him—$40 billion.

The film is about how all that wealth attracts the wrong people into his life, and how he is able to transform them.

for his part, **Clint Eastwood** is cast as an ex-FBI profiler in "Blood Work." As he closes in on his latest adversary, a serial killer, he is felled by a massive heart attack. Two years later, he learns that his life was saved by the death of someone else, the victim of a murder that remains unsolved.

Against the advice of his doctors, Eastwood's character puts his life on the line to track down the murderer, who has forced him to take this case personally.

Finally, **Reese Witherspoon** plays a fashion designer who's engaged to a very eligible bachelor (**Patrick Dempsey**). However, her past holds many secrets, including the redneck husband she married in high school, who refuses to divorce her.

Determined to end their contentious relationship, she sneaks back home to Alabama to confront her past. But she discovers that falling in love a second time is even better than the first.

Auditions

TANGHALANG Pilipino announces auditions for "Ang Ligawang Ligaw," a Filipino production of Shakespeare's "Love's Labour's Lost," from 4 to 8 p.m. on Sept. 21 and 22 at the CCP Multi-Purpose Hall. Call 832-3661.

St. Tropez at Calesa Bar

EVERY Thursday night, the St. Tropez band performs at Hyatt Regency Manila's famous Calesa Music Bar and Lounge. The band's repertoire includes pop, Broadway, rhythm and blues, disco, OPM, Latin jazz fussion and big-band standards.

'Quadrille'

THE MCO Arts Festival 2002 presents its third concert, "Quadrille," at 7 p.m. on Sept. 28 at the Francisco Santiago Hall of Equitable PCI Bank Tower 1.

The ensemble concert features well-known pianists **Mary Ann Rivas Armovit, Della Gamboa Besa, Anamaria Gregorio de Guzman** and **Raul M. Sunico**. The repertoire is made up

SANDLER /A24

God, life, boys, girls . . .

From page A26

roccan palace, Jane, a jazz singer and tormented soul, sings her blues to the general indifference of all and sundry. A woman who has let life slip by a man who has scoffed at death are bound to meet, particularly when they both share the same obsession of forgetting their past.

"Mostly Martha" (Germany). In present-day Germany, Martha, head chef for an upscale restaurant, relies on her culinary skills as her primary means of communication. She lives for her work and presides with obsessive care over a spotless, precise kitchen. When her sister dies in a car accident, Martha has to care for Lina, her 8-year-old niece, a girl who proves as resolute and single-minded as her aunt.

"The Discovery of Heaven" (Netherlands). Based on Harry Mulischa's 900-page epic spanning three generations, the film presents a God who is disappointed with the human race and wants his stone tablets back. An angel is given the assignment and with Gabriel's help the angel tries to manipulate several humans on Earth to get his job done. But humans have a will of their own . . .

I must say this film would spark debates among the various religious sects in the Philippines. It will be utterly interesting to absorb the various reactions ranging from the "holier than thou" to the "sacrilegious" types.

"Love and Tiny Toes" (Portugal). Macao, south of China, 1900: From the luxurious great halls of the Christian city to the sordid alleys of the Chinese town, a badly loved young girl faces the arrogant son of a distinct family.

"The Red Squirrel" (Spain). One summer night, in the town of San Sebastian, Jota is banging himself against the railings of the pier, trying to find the strength to throw himself off. All of a sudden, a motorcycle hits the far end of the railings and he sees the rider fall onto the sand. When he goes to help, he finds himself looking into the brown eyes of a girl who has lost her memory. Jota accompanies the girl to the hospital where she is admitted under the name Lisa. He pretends he is her boyfriend and says they have been living together for four years.

"Such is Life (Sweden). The plot involves lounge pianist Tin-Tin who has just a couple of weeks left until her self-imposed deadline, her 30th birthday, to get married. She lives with Paul, who dispenses advice over the radio on other people's relationships while he has no clue as to how to handle his own.

"Crush" (United Kingdom). This is the story of three friends living in a small English village who meet every Monday to swap stories about their love lives (or lack thereof) to determine who's the saddest of them all: private school headmistress Kate, local police detective Janine, and doctor Molly. Things turn sour with the trio, however, when Kate becomes involved with a younger man and is no longer "sad."

For feedback, email friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com

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Schedules are subject to change without prior notice.

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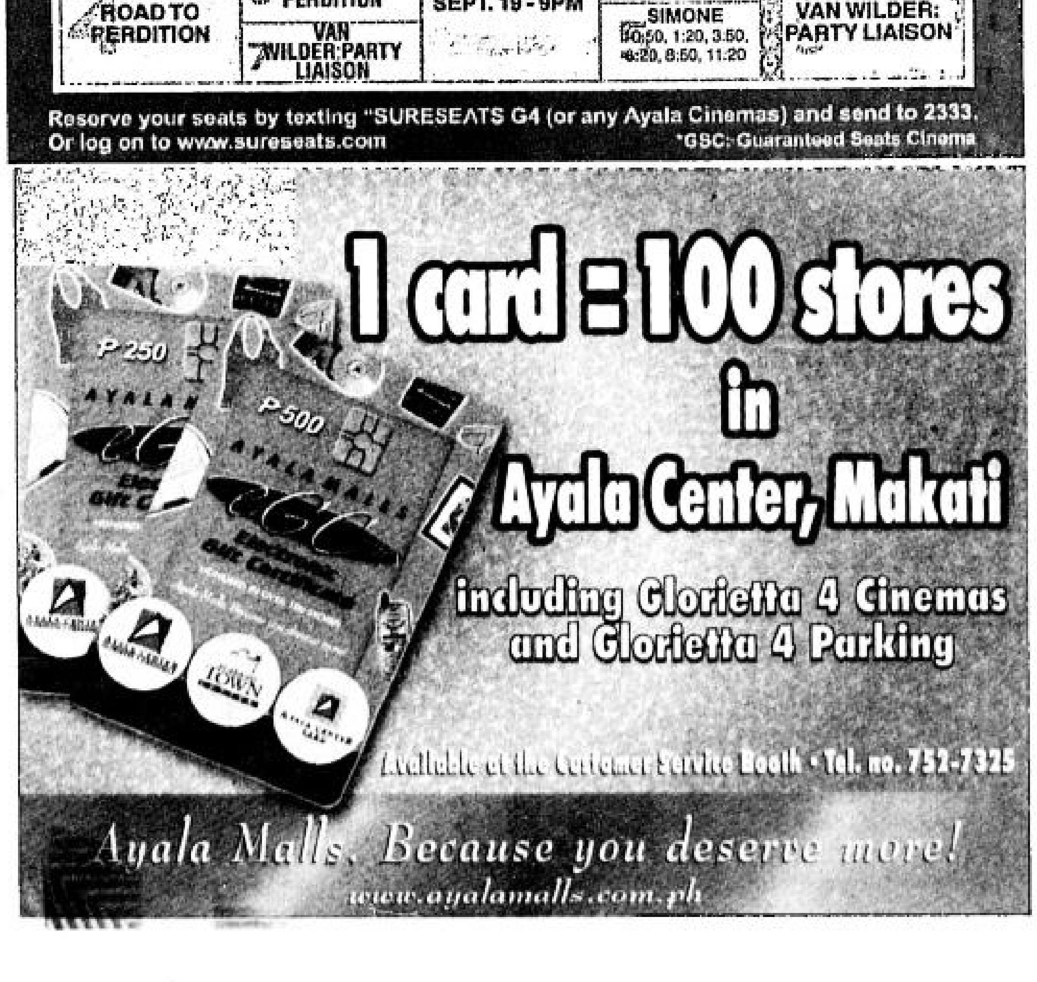

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

What to see in Cine Europa

By Constantino C. Tejero

FOR those who have had a surfeit of Asian cinema from the month-long screenings of Cinemanila last month (and in its trail, the ongoing screening of Zhang Yimou's "Happy Times" in Artfilm at Greenbelt 1, and the forthcoming regular screening of Wong Kar-wai's "In the Mood for Love"), there should be a bracing respite in the fifth edition of Cine Europa.

This annual film festival, mounted at the Shangri-la Plaza Mall by the Delegation of the European Commission and the embassies of the 15 member states of the European Union, has become almost like a tradition to Filipino film enthusiasts.

Admission to the screenings in The Shang's Cinema 1 is free to the general public, and seats are on a first-come, first-served basis. So moviegoers come in hordes and file up in long, long queues 30 minutes before each screening.

This year's Cine Europa features10 entries and runs Sept. 20-29. Although the qualities of the films being screened fluctuate from year to year, it can never be denied that the program has been well considered, the films well chosen.

In fact, this year's entries have been hyped as "some of the very best in recent European cinema, all the films highly acclaimed, having been shown at Europe's most prestigious film festivals."

We won't quarrel with that. On the contrary, we advise moviegoers to see all 10 films. Those who care about how they live—the nature and quality of their life—in the other part of the world should queue up now.

But if your schedules won't permit, we recommend the following: France's "And Now . . . Ladies and Gentlemen," directed by Claude Lelouch; Belgium's "Ma Vie en Rose" (My Life in Pink), by Alain Berliner; the Netherlands' "The Discovery of Heaven," by Jeroen Krabbe; Spain's "La Ardilla Roja" (The Red Squirrel)," by Julio Medem; Portugal's "Amor e Dedinhos de Pé (Love and Tiny Toes)," by Luis Felipe Rocha; Germany's "Bella Martha" (Mostly Martha), by Sandra Nettelbeck; Finland's "Drakarna över Hensingfors" (Kites over Helsinki), by Peter Lindholm.

Nine of the films will go to Cebu, to be screened Oct. 2-4 at the Ayala Center, in cooperation with the Arts Council of Cebu.

We hope the organizers will consider screening their films next year in other urban centers of the country, such as Davao, Iloilo, Bacolod, Baguio, Puerto Princesa, Cabanatuan, Angeles, Tacloban, Legazpi, Cagayan de Oro.

For cultural interaction, film could be the most effective tool with the quickest result. And people in those areas need that more than do people in Metro Manila, who have easy access to such.

(It's just a bit disheartening, though, that, again, as in last year, Italy has sent no entry. What might be happening over there?)

The Company at Hard Rock

SHOWS

THE VOCAL sextet The Company returns to Hard Rock Café after their successful stint in the venue last April and May.

The group performs in all Thursdays of Sept., 8:30 p.m.

Music lovers are in for an unforgettable night of fabulous songs as The Company dishes out homegrown hits, standard classics, pop favorites and cuts from their latest hit album, "Storybook."

The audience can also look forward to the hit songs from "Storybook" like Ruben Laurente's "Nagkataon" and Annie Quintos' "Baka Ikaw."

The Company is a major force behind the growing strength of original materials in the local music scene. Moy Ortiz, the group's songwriter and vocalist, wrote such hits as Aiza Seguerra's "Pagdating ng Panahon" and Pops Fernandez's "Kaya Pala."

Mossimo and Lipton Ice Tea support The Company's show at Hard Rock. For reservations, call 893-4661 to 64.

Hotdog relives hits

THE HOTDOG Band has seen many changes in their time. Musicians and female vocalists have come and gone, not without their invaluable contributions to some of the band's biggest hits. But the band's mainstays are brothers Dennis and Rene Garcia who, in 20 years, have scored a bunch of awards for their compositions and various performances.

Last year, the tribute album "Bandang Pinoy Lasang Hotdog" was released by BMG Records (Pilipinas), featuring today's top artists.

Barbie's Cradle did their version of "Langit Na Naman," Cookie Chua revived "Perslab" and Parokya ni Edgar rehashed "Beh Buti Nga."

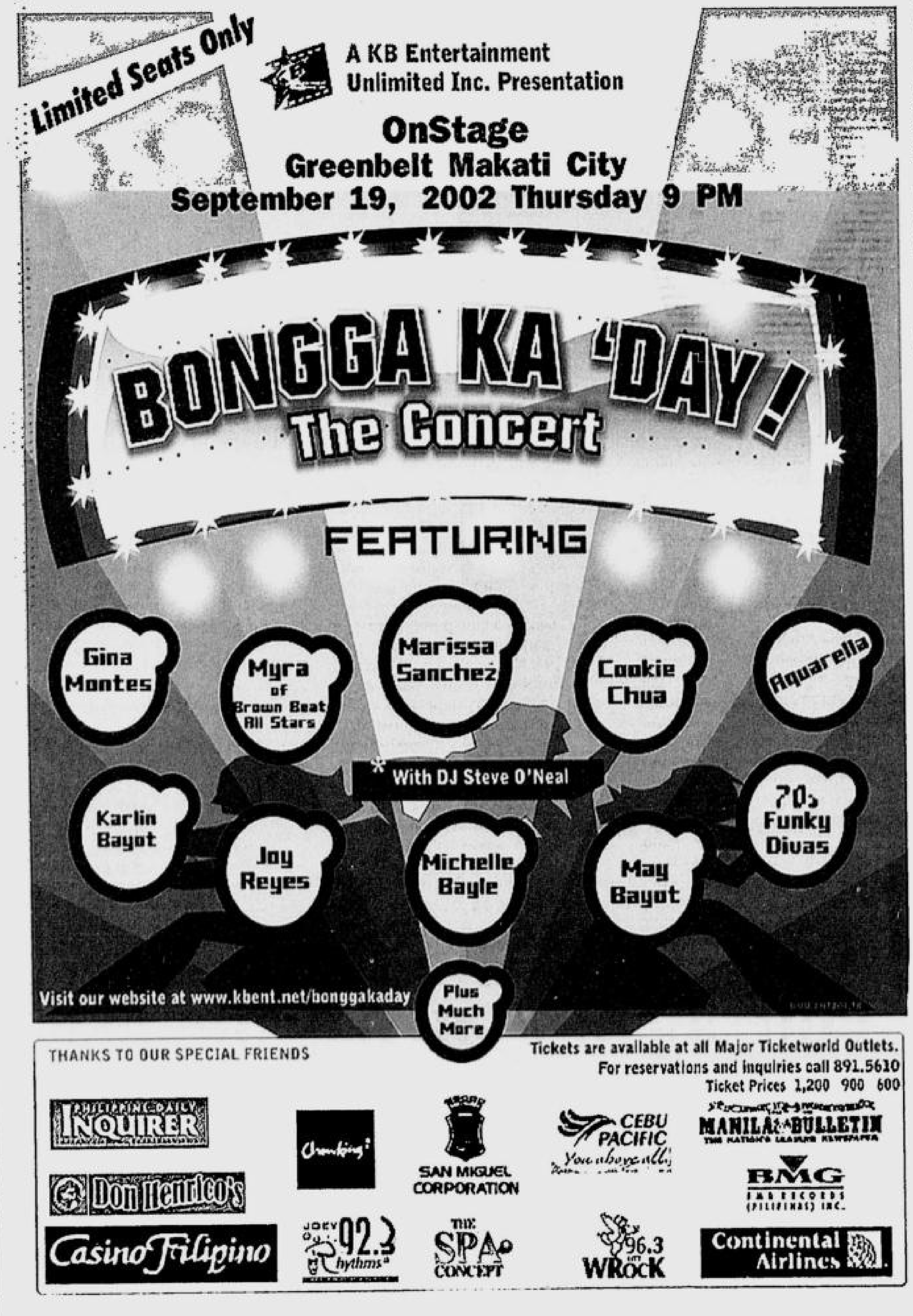
These young musicians pumped fresh blood into the timeless Hotdog hits and allowed a new generation of audience to experience the Hotdog phenomenon.

At 9 tonight, the much-loved music of Hotdog will once again be refreshed by a show with a distinct twist.

"Bongga Ka Day The Concert" features DJ Steve O'Neal at the helm at Onstage Greenbelt, Makati City.

The lineup female performers include Marissa Sanchez, Cookie Chua, Myrna of Brown Beat All Stars, May Bayot, Aquarella, Hotdog Divas, Joy Reyes, Gina Montes and '70s Funky Divas.

BAYOT



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MUTUAL ADMIRATION. Martin and Boy

Boy Abunda according to Martin Nievera

By Bayani San Diego,
Contributor

THAT it comes from Concert King Martin Nievera himself makes it all the more significant. Madman Martin has nothing but praises for fellow ABS-CBN TV host Boy Abunda.

"He is the most gifted and most articulate interviewer, both in Tagalog and in English, working on TV today, especially when the subject is show biz," Martin says of Boy.

Martin himself has been hosting on TV for almost two decades now—from "Penthouse Live" to "Martin Late at Night." Throughout his show biz odyssey, he has been fervently championed by Boy in various capacities, first as publicist, later as personal friend, and now as TV host.

Martin admits he always has a blast whenever he is interviewed by Boy, who now hosts three ABS-CBN talk shows—"The Buzz" every Sunday, 4-5:30 p.m., "Private Conversations With Boy Abunda" every Thursday on ANC, 9-10 p.m., and "etc." Monday to Friday, 5:30-6 p.m.

Boom-boom-boom!

"I tend to listen too much," Martin says. "But Boy can squeeze in dozens of questions even in a short span of time. Remember, Boy is a writer first and foremost. And because he is a writer, he knows how important it is to ask the right questions.

"He really does his research and prepares well before each interview. After a guest answers his prepared question, another question will be born from that answer, and so on and so forth."

Martin describes Boy the interviewer as "like a machine gun, boom-boom-boom!"

Martin says an interview subject needs to be just as talkative to keep up with Boy, if not more talkative than he.

"If you are slow or if you are hiding something, it would be scary to talk to someone like Boy," he says. "But even if a guest were guarded or couldn't keep up, Boy will still be able to get the answers out. It won't be as fun an interview, though."

Good and bad

The feeling is mutual as far as Boy is concerned. Boy confirms that it is a pleasure to interview and be interviewed by Martin. He cautions, however, that interviewing an "incorrigible chatterbox" like Martin can also be a double-edged sword.

"It can be a good thing, but it can also be a bad thing when your guest is chatty," says Boy. "As a host, you can relax when you are interviewing people like Kris Aquino, Katrina Legarda and Martin Nievera. They talk as if there is no camera."

Martin returns the compliment.

"Whenever Boy interviews me, the rapport is very evident onscreen," he says. "The timing is impeccable. It looks rehearsed and people think it's all scripted, but it's not."

"There is always a different way to do it with each guest," Boy says. "That makes our job difficult. There is no surefire formula. That's where the challenge lies.

"The most exciting part part of 'etc.' is that I am allowed to interview people from all walks of life. I interview everyone, from movie stars to *manghuhula* (fortune-tellers), from politicians to the man on the street."

No flops

A recent episode of "etc." featured gay streetwalkers, cross-dressing prostitutes. The piece was titled "Mga Diosa ng Gabi" (Goddesses of the Night).

"It's show biz, it's *kababalaghan* (occult)," Boy says of the new show. "It's politics. The range is wider (than my other shows)."

To keep viewers glued to their sets, Boy constantly always works hard, keeping his romance with TV hosting ever burning bright.

"Based on his track record," Martin says, paying the ultimate tribute to Boy, "all the shows he has done so far are well-made. There has never been a flop in his hosting career, no matter what station he's on. It's not the network that makes Boy, it's Boy that makes the network. It's not the show that makes Boy, it's Boy that makes the show."

God, life, boys, girls in Cine Europa

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

CINE Europa will open tomorrow at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall's Cinema.

It would be a welcome change to watch non-Hollywood movies. And all for free.

Catching the different films from the various European countries will take you on a journey through Europe without need of a visa.

Based on my travels, no two places are the same in Europe. Even an aimless stroll will take you to a breathtaking spot. Art, culture and passion are an everyday thing in that magical continent.

Let me share with you the synopses of the 10 featured films.

"Born in Absurdistan" (Austria). In a hospital in Vienna, the newborn babies, Kari and Heiri, of an Austrian couple and a Turkish family of immigrant workers are mixed up and go home with the wrong parents. By the time the mistake comes to light, it emerges that the Turkish family, including the baby, has been deported.

"My Life in Pink" (Belgium). Ludovic is a young boy who can't wait to grow up to be a woman. When his family discovers the little girl blossoming in him, they are forced to contend with their own discomfort and the lack of understanding from their new neighbors

I found the original French title of this movie real cute. It's "Ma Vie en Rose," which reminds me of the famous French song "La Vie En Rose."

I was struck by the comment of Mr. **Vergeylen** of the Belgian Embassy about this film: "Why is it that when little girls like to play rough and wear jumpers, we find nothing wrong with it, but once a little boy shows interest in feminine stuff we get alarmed?"

"Kites Over Helsinki" (Finland). It tells about the growth process of the Bexar family, from harmony in the '70s to total chaos in the '90s. It's about the expectations of Henrik, the father, towards his sons Dani and Riku and his inability to see and accept them for what they are.

"And Now . . . Ladies and Gentleman" (France). Valentin, a gentleman thief of English origin, sets out to sea from Fecamp in a magnificent yacht. The purpose of his solo world tour is to break away from his past, not escape from the police. Meanwhile, in a Mos

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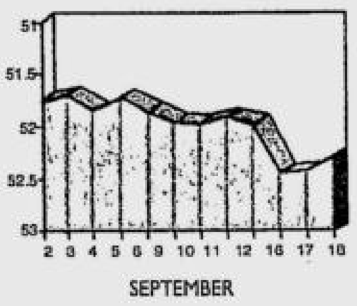

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Stocks down 4%

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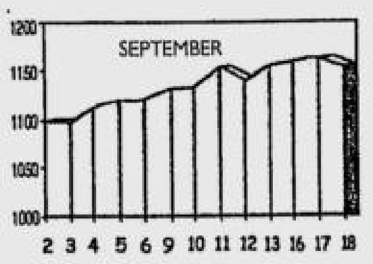

(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARES snapped a three-day winning streak yesterday, dragged down by profit-taking in several key large caps including Globe Telecom, which shed over 4 percent, traders said.

AB Capital Securities senior analyst Jose Vistan said that falls on Wall Street and some European markets over skepticism towards Iraq's pledge to allow weapons inspectors back into the country may have also affected the market.

The main Philippine index ended down 9.23 points, or 0.79 percent, at 1,153.30 points.

Value turnover fell to a meager P206.59 million from P393.38 million, with 12 advancers, 30 decliners and 38 stocks unchanged.

Most of the main index's slide was accounted for by Globe and Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI).

Reuters

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has set a major rebuilding program for the automotive industry anchored on a generous export incentives package and formidable tariff barriers to spur the export of completely built up (CBU) units and jack up local production to 200,000 units a year.

The rebuilding plan will be implemented under the newly overhauled Motor Vehicle Development Program (MVDP).

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II said the DTI had started negotiations with the Department of Finance to formulate a special export incentive package, that might include the granting of export subsidies, for the automotive industry.

"The Philippines has a unique opportunity among the Asean-6 to use export subsidies starting next year under the rules of the World Trade Organization. We should be able to maximize the use of this window to significantly increase exports of vehicles and automotive parts," Roxas said. Asean-6 refers to the group's founding members—the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Brunei.

Roxas explained that the Philippines was allowed by WTO rules to offer incentives to attract investments after its per capita income fell below $1,000 this year.

In the previous years, the government was forced to withdraw these perks because per capita income exceeded $1,000.

Roxas said the export perks package should encourage assemblers to ship out more CBUs and raise industry exports (mostly automotive components) from its current level of $1 billion. Automakers such as Toyota, Honda, Mitsubishi, and Nissan have committed to export CBUs at the start of the Asean Free Trade Area in 2003 while Ford had already started CBU exports a few months ago.

Most of the industry's exports are coursed through projects under the Asean Industrial Cooperation scheme which the DTI was also pushing for extension.

Roxas said the DTI was batting for a minimum production of 200,000 vehicles to achieve a critical mass that would ensure the viability and sustainability of local parts and components manufacturing industries.

Philippine vehicle sales languished at 76,670 units last year or less than half of the industry's peak of 162,097 units in 1996 while other major Asean automotive markets have recovered to their pre-crisis levels,

The local industry has blamed the surge in used, right-hand drive vehicle imports for the lackluster sales which the DTI estimated at 52,000 units or nearly 70 percent of the new vehicles sold in 2001. The scourge of vehicle imports should finally be addressed by the new MVDP's explicit ban on the importation of used vehicles except for select trucks and buses, heavy equipment, fire trucks and ambulances and units covered by the Balikbayan Vehicle Import Program.

On top of the export incentives, the DTI is proposing to hoist most favored nation (MFN) tariff rates (duties for non-Asean countries) to as much as 50 percent for CBUs and 30 percent for completely knocked down (CKD) units.

MFN duties were scheduled to go down to 5 percent in 2004 from 30 percent for CBUs and 3 percent to 10 percent for CKDs. The move should align the Philippines automotive MFN rates with other Asean countries and protect the domestic market from the onslaught of vehicles made outside Asean.

RP has enough oil stock, DOE assures public

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE ENERGY department yesterday assured the public that the country has enough oil inventory to meet domestic demand in case of disruption in supply due to threats of war in the Middle East.

The department, however, added that it was also considering options like fuel stockpiling and activation of a petroleum supply agreement among Asean countries to ensure local supply in case of "extra ordinary" conditions.

Energy Undersecretary Cyril del Callar said in a briefing that the local oil companies' inventory of crude and petroleum products could last up to 59 days.

"This is well over the normal level of 40 days, which had been the average since 1998," Del Callar said.

The official explained that the DOE had been strictly monitoring crude and products inventories of the oil firms in the last few weeks.

He said the stocks of the three oil majors—Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Caltex (Philippines) Inc.—stood between 20 and 22 days each while crude in transit could last another 17 days.

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BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

JUST recently, the Philippine Stock Exchange went on a "road show." It was a big media event. Present were big shots in business and in this cute administration of Gloriaetta.

Now, "road show" is the term they use in finance to mean "sales pitch" in marketing. In karaoke bar lingo, it is known simply as "plunging neckline."

By going on that road show, anyway, the PSE was actually trying to perk up the dreary stock market. I'm afraid the show went through nothing but bumpy rocky roads.

Word in the stock market is that it did not seem to create even just a minor stir among stockbrokers. There is a word they use to describe it.

A stockbroker, speaking on condition I stop ordering "ladies' drinks," said the room was filled with the staff of stockbrokers. This, in Pinoy politics, is known as *hakot*.

* * *

WE can liken the PSE road show to a political rally. It had a lot of the usual speeches. These were sprinkled with the usual promises. The crowd also got the usual free lunch.

In the afternoon, a huge part of the audience was gone. It did not surprise me. With the market this dull, brokers and their staff are used to taking whole-day siestas.

I just don't know if the PSE road show told us anything about public interest in the stock market. I'm not sure if the road show even connected with the real investors.

They are, first of all, the foreign fund managers. They have been rushing to get out of the stock market for the past several months.

Among the locals, the audience should be those high net worth individuals in Binondo. They just take their cue from foreign fund managers. You know—herd?

* * *

CERTAINLY, the low volume in the stock market today is the biggest problem. One recent day, the total transaction amounted to a pathetic P60 million.

That's just a little more than a million dollars. To most of my contacts in Binondo, that is not even enough money for one round of ladies' drinks.

Good economic figures do not the stock market boom make. This market has always relied on excitement in a particular sector.

It was mostly speculation. First was the mining boom, and then came the burning speculation on oil drilling, until finally it was hit by the recent real estate fever.

After the Asian financial crisis, some groups tried to reproduce here the IT boom in the United States. It suffered an indigestion before it could even let out a single burp.

* * *

THIS market, like it or not, needs something exciting in a specific sector. Just what sector will spark off the next stock boom even Madame Auring dare not hazard a guess on.

No industry sector stands out in the economic crowd. This is the problem. In fact, we have industry sectors that stick out for their troubles.

Manufacturing is up against the Afta. Real estate is littered with half-finished high-rises. Banks are burdened with bad loans. The karaoke-bar sector has the problem of "*tong*."

Surely, we still have booming sectors. Leading among them is the export of manpower. Unfortunately, recruitment agencies for all those Pinoy seamen are not listed.

Another thriving sector is politics, which is unlistable. But gambling is booming. Which brings me to the point: Why can't we just list the highly profitable Pagcor?

* * *

BEFORE this market can even think of a comeback for the banking and real estate sectors, it must pray for a miracle in the Senate.

Based on word going around business, the so-called Magnificent "7" in the Senate are taking the cocky road, holding the SPAV bill hostage.

The bill lays down rules for the "special purpose asset vehicle," which is the private sector's version of the government's Asset Privatization Trust, or APT.

My info is that the Manificent "7" are all part of the administration bloc, which holds a precarious majority, and that's why Senate President Frank "the Shoes" Drilon is helpless.

They are the four members of the House bloc, plus one senator who just recovered from sickness, another who is reportedly very sick, and one who can pass for a mere decor.

* * *

If a minority group of senators can hold an important bill hostage, I don't think it's a good showcase of this cute administration's ongoing fight against terrorism, both the real and the political kind.

It's hard to say why the Magnificent "7" don't want to act on the SPAV bill. The idea is nothing new to us. In fact, I think we invented it. We were the first in Asia to use the scheme.

The reason was that we were the first ever country in Asia, together with a lot of countries in South America, to have our banks get into a lot of trouble.

As I said, the government's APT was our first ever SPAV. It took out the bad loans of government banks DBP and PNB, and then sold the assets at a bargain.

But what happened to the closed Urban Bank was different. It was not a SPAV scheme. It was just a scheme, period.

* * *

ACTUALLY, Urban Bank bought the bad loans of its subsidiary, an investment house, at prices that were quite high. The subsidiary turned around to pay its high net-worth investors, including relatives of some Urban Bank executives.

The depositors of the bank itself suffered. Among them were the pension funds of San Miguel, Meralco and Petron. Their billions were tied up with the closed bank.

The Urban Bank case even got PDIC boss Boy Nazareno into trouble. Some Urban Bank executives filed a case against him with the Ombudsman.

Just before Ombudsman Aniano Desierto retired, he ruled that Nazareno should be suspended. My info is that somebody gave Ani an order he could not refuse.

As a trade-off, though, Ani made Nazareno's suspension for 30 days plus one. This means that Nazareno can appeal the decision.

Had it been only a 30-day suspension, it should be done right away. It was one time that Nazareno should be thankful for getting a more severe penalty. What a life!

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, September 18, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	18.5	19	18.5	19	389,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	47	47	46.5	47	1,517,600
China Banking Corp.	620	630	620	630	2,810
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	20,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	29	29	29	29	77,000
First E-Bank Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	45,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	34.5	35	34.5	34.5	31,500
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	1,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	19.25	19.25	19	19	6,000
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	10,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	900	900	895	895	280
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.25	4,900
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.52	3,400,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	520	520	495	495	23,430
ISM Communications Corp.	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	200,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.8	2.95	2.8	2.95	15,000
Piltel	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	100,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	300	300	297.5	300	15,190
Ivantage Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	50,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	15,600,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	24,100
Manila Electric Co. B	32.5	32.5	32	32	29,900
Petron Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.62	1.62	748,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	188,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	1,134,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	7,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	1,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.14	2.14	2.14	2.14	50,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.75	14	13.75	14	375,500
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	31	31	31	31	22,000
RFM Corp.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	100,000
San Miguel Corp. A	52.5	53	52.5	53	218,800
San Miguel Corp. B	56.5	56.5	56.5	56.5	58,300
Universal Robina Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	10,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	2,694,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42	300,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	10,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	64,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.25	0.27	0.25	0.26	730,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	500,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.5	62,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	14.25	14.25	14	14.25	392,200
Ionics Inc.	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	24,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	22,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	1,530,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	120,000
Music Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.15	0.15	910,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	1,060,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	150,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Macondray Plastics Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	10,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	7.9	8.1	7.9	8.1	31,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	20,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.21	510,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.75	23.75	23.5	23.5	8,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,200
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	200
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	4	4	4	4	10,000
Far Eastern University	470	470	470	470	30
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.9	6	5.9	5.9	3,245,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	400,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	530,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.14	1.14	1,608,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.05	0.0525	0.05	0.05	6,100,000
City & Land Developers	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	100,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	10,000
SM Development Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.02	1.02	230,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.9	6	5.8	5.9	5,080,000
UrbanCorp. Realty Dev. Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	400,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	60,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	10,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	20,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	160,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	420,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	10,000,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	1,700,000

Lopez holding company misses payments on P2B worth of debt

By Doris C. Dumlao

BENPRES Holdings Corp. has again missed interest payments on a P2-billion long-term commercial paper that fell due on Tuesday.

In a disclosure yesterday, Benpres, holding company of the Lopez family, informed the Philippine Stock Exchange that it was still working on its "balance sheet management," with US-based Credit Suisse First Boston as its financial adviser.

Benpres had already missed interest payments on the same debt paper, which would mature in October next year, in June.

The company, which has interests in power generation, media, property development and water distribution, announced earlier that it was seeking to reschedule close to $600 million in debts, including $189 million in direct debts and another $407.8 million incurred by its subsidiaries.

It was earlier reported that Benpres proposed a debt restructuring plan to its creditors that involved semi-annual interest payments on its direct debt of $189 million over the next 10 years.

The interest payments were to start in November and would continue every six months thereafter.

To raise money to pay its creditors, Benpres is also set to sell its non-core assets, including all or part of its stake in water concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc., property developer Rockwell Land Corp., infrastructure arm First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp. and consolidated cable provider Beyond Cable Inc.

The company is planning to aggressively downsize its assets and focus only on flagship units ABS CBN Broadcasting Corp. and First Philippine Holdings Corp. where it owns 57 percent and 47 percent.

The proposed debt rescheduling is needed to allow Benpres to execute an orderly asset divestment program and emerge as a leaner, less leveraged enterprise.

DHL sets aside $5M for gateway

By Abigail L. Ho

INTERNATIONAL courier services provider DHL Worldwide Express Corp. is set to invest at least $5 million in the Philippines next year to refurbish its Villamor Air base gateway facility.

In an interview yesterday, DHL Philippines national marketing manager Elisa May Cuevas said this figure was even "very conservative," as it would take several millions of dollars to accomplish these major improvement efforts.

She added that the company would infuse even more into the country over the next few years, as it was eyeing expansion of its gateways, particularly in Cebu and other parts of southern Philippines.

These gateways are where DHL shipments from all over the world are received.

Apart from gateway facility expansions, new investments will be used to establish DHL service centers all over the country.

Service centers are distribution points for the packages that DHL handles.

Earlier in the year, DHL invested around $15 million to buy new delivery vans, and improve its service centers, country office and information technology infrastructure.

Cuevas said DHL remained upbeat and assured its customers that the company would be here for the long haul.

Erap economic planner doubts second-quarter growth figures

By Clarissa S. Batino

FORMER Economic Planning Secretary Felipe Medalla said yesterday the domestic economy probably grew by only 3.6 percent from April to June this year.

"There seem to be a widespread feeling that the economy grew by less than 4 percent if we would use another methodology that may be more applicable to our current situation," Medalla, who steered the economy as director general of the National Economic and Development Authority under former President Joseph Estrada, said.

Medalla explained that there were two approaches to measuring GDP growth.

One is value-based, which measures production, while the other is expenditure-based, which measures consumption.

GDP refers to the monetary value of all goods and services produced by an economy over a specified period. It includes consumption, government purchases, investments, and exports minus imports. It is perhaps the greatest indicator of the economic health of a country.

Medalla said that based on his calculations using consumption, the economy grew by only 3.6 percent to 3.7 percent during the second quarter as compared to the 4.5-percent GDP growth reported by Neda.

He said other indicators, particularly sluggish credit growth and money supply, supported his findings that the second-quarter GDP data might have been overstated.

"There is an overall sentiment that the 4.5-percent growth seem to have very little impact on the public. Maybe it's not just a problem of a slow trickle down effect but maybe growth is really much smaller to begin with that's why we can't feel it," Medalla said.

Metrobank fined over disclosure miscue

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has ordered Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., the country's largest bank, to fully disclose details of its voluntary offer to buy shares held by Global Business Bank's minority stockholders.

It also ordered Metrobank to pay a fine of P100,000 for failing to disclose the necessary information on time.

Metrobank disclosed in early August that it would make a voluntary tender offer to minority shareholders of Global Bank covering the period Aug. 15 to Sept. 15 this year to swap 1.973 Metrobank shares for every one Global Bank share.

Metrobank, owned and controlled by taipan George Ty, owns 60 percent of Global Bank.

Upon Metrobank's disclosure, the commission, through its corporation finance department, called the bank"s attention and pointed out that voluntary tender offers should first be registered with the SEC.

In response, however, Metrobank argued that its voluntary tender offer was not covered by the Securities Regulation Code.

It also claimed that it had substantially complied with the disclosure requirements of the SEC's tender offer rule that included, among others, publication in newspapers of general circulation and the distribution of written notices to all of Global Bank shareholders.

In a statement, the SEC asserted that Metrobank's voluntary tender offer was indeed subject to the requirements of the Securities Regulation Code.

It said Metrobank should publish the offer, file the corresponding tender offer statements in the prescribed forms and pay the filing fees, which amounted to P3.6 million.

Under Rule 19.1 of the Securities Regulation Code, any person making a tender offer shall make a public announcement of his intention, prior to the commencement of the offer.

CURRENCIES

Sept. 18, 2002 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.026378	1.000000	52.4170
Japan	Yen	0.008416	0.008200	0.4298
United Kingdom	Pound	1.582675	1.542000	80.8270
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.131595	0.128213	6.7205
Switzerland	Franc	0.680396	0.662910	34.7478
Canada	Dollar	0.648908	0.632231	33.1397
Singapore	Dollar	0.578339	0.563476	29.5357
Australia	Dollar	0.561538	0.547106	28.6777
Bahrain	Dinar	2.722560	2.652590	139.0408
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.273701	0.266667	13.9779
Brunei	Dollar	0.575066	0.560287	29.3686
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000113	0.000110	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.023875	0.023261	1.2193
UAE	Dirham	0.279454	0.272272	14.2717
Korea	Won	0.000849	0.000827	0.0433
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.974300	51.0699
Argentina	Real	0.282749	0.275482	14.4399
Brazil	Real	0.318652	0.310463	16.2735
Denmark	Kroner	0.134522	0.131065	6.8700
India	Rupee	0.021229	0.020683	1.0841
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.270135	0.263193	13.7958
Mexico	New Peso	0.103050	0.100402	5.2628
New Zealand	Dollar	0.481777	0.469395	24.6043
Norway	Kroner	0.136045	0.132549	.9478
Pakistan	Rupee	0.017366	0.016920	0.8869
South Africa	Rand	0.097299	0.094798	4.9690
Sweden	Kroner	0.109501	0.106687	5.5922
Syria	Pound	0.023221	0.022624	1.1859
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.029596	0.028835	1.5114
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000711	0.000693	0.0363

RP has enough oil stock, DOE assures public

From page B1

"We have sufficient supply of oil in the event of a disruption (brought about by a possible) United States-Iraq tension," Del Callar said.

He added that the government was prepared and had taken the necessary measures to address new developments in the Middle East.

Del Callar said among the options considered by the government stockpiling and activation of the Asean Petroleum Supply Agreement or Apsa.

The Apsa is an agreement wherein oil exporting Asean members committed to supply crude to non oil-producing members.

Del Callar said local oil companies were currently getting portions of their crude and product needs from Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand.

He said the government was also studying the possible impact of stockpiling on finances, particularly on who would shoulder the additional costs.

"Stockpiling is only one of the many options we are looking at," Del Callar said. "We do not want to unduly burden the consumers of its impact."

The Energy Contingency Task Force—which the energy secretary chairs—will be convened next week to discuss all options available, he said.

However, Del Callar said that past global crises like the Persian Gulf War in 1991 and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks against the United States did not cause major oil supply disruptions.

"The impact of these crises has always been on the price of oil," he said.

BSP sees banks' NPL ratio dropping to 15% this month

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE LOCAL commercial banks' bad loans in July dropped to 17.77 percent of their total loans from 18.06 percent in June, boosting hopes that the banking system's non-performing loans level would improve to about 15 percent this month when the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas was expected to start implementing a looser definition of non-performing loans.

Data from the BSP showed that the sector's NPL ratio to total loan portfolio improved in July as soured accounts slid by P2.838 billion to P286.132 billion, from P288.97 billion a month ago, while its total loan portfolio improved by P10.063 billion to P1.610 trillion, from June's P1.6 trillion. July's NPL level is so far the lowest this year.

The banks' improving loan quality convinced the central bank to implement starting this month a policy that excludes from the NPL accounts debts that have already been practically written off. With this, some P45 billion worth of loans will be taken out of the banks' NPL account improving the NPL ratio to total loans by two-and-a-half percentage points.

Criticized by Standard & Poor's the other day for encouraging banks to be less transparent, the BSP said banks had to meet stiff conditions, including a 100-percent loan-loss provision, set by the Monetary Board before its loans could qualify for exclusion from the NPL computation. For the loans to qualify, they should have no unbooked valuation reserve or other capital adjustments.

Even if certain loans qualified for exclusion from the NPL computation, banks are not allowed to remove the amount in their balance sheets, said BSP assistant governor Nestor Espenilla.

"The new ruling does not affect the capital adequacy ratio of banks. It will not window dress income or total assets. In the end, it will alleviate a bank's position through a more reflective NPL ratio," said Espenilla.

As of July, the banks' provision for loan losses increased by P955 million or 0.68 percent to P137.675 billion, raising the coverage ratio to 48.12 percent from 47.32 percent in June.

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ADB keeps RP outlook despite budget deficit

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN Development Bank has reaffirmed its forecast that the Philippine economy will grow by 4 to 4.5 percent, but it has also expressed serious concerns over the government's ballooning budget deficit.

"The most important problem affecting the Philippine economy is the financing of the budget deficit. The deficit problem is one of the systemic weaknesses in raising tax revenues, which remain below potential," the bank said in its quarterly Asian Development Outlook released yesterday.

"After the government's efforts at restoring fiscal discipline and controlling the budget deficit in 2001, the situation in the Philippines deteriorated significantly during the first half of 2002," it noted.

The government has exceeded its P130-billion budget deficit cap for the full year in the first seven months of the year. Among the remedial actions being taken to boost tax collection include the restructuring of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, simplifying the tax code, taking legal action against non-complying taxpayers and implementing a moral suasion targeting corporate lawyers.

"The main reason for the persistent budget deficit is, on the one hand, the low level of tax collection and, on the other hand, an increase in expenditures to prepare the country for the possible negative effects of an El Niño later in 2002 and 2003 e.g. new irrigation systems," the ADB said.

The government has maintained the original cap as a "fighting target" but acknowledged that the nominal amount might be exceeded by the end of the year.

"Although the increasing deficit is not a problem of excessive spending, the government is re-prioritizing public capital works and contemplating expenditure cuts to offset revenue slippages," the ADB noted.

"Some initiatives to improve efficiency have borne immediate results, including the widening use of electronic procurement, which has yielded substantial budget savings by greater transparency in the awarding of public contracts," it said. *Doris C. Dumlao*

RP gets bigger share of FDI flow to Asean

FOREIGN direct investments in the country surged by 50 percent last year despite a general decline in capital flows to Southeast Asia, according to a report by the United Nations World Investment Report.

The UN report noted that the Philippines' FDIs climbed to $1.8 billion in 2001 from $1.2 billion in 2000, much better than the regional (FDI in Asia-Pacific was down 20 percent) and global (worldwide FDI was down 50 percent) performances.

The annual UN study said FDI flows to Southeast Asia stagnated due to divestments in Indonesia (worth $3 billion last year) that have exceeded inflows since 1998 and waning investor interest in Malaysia. Other top performers in Asean were Singapore (up 59 percent to $9 billion), Thailand (up 35 percent to $3.8 billion), and Vietnam (up 33 percent to $3 billion).

BOI managing head Gregorio Domingo attributed the strong FDI inflow to the country's stable economic growth despite the change in administration in 2001.

Domingo told participants in the World Investment Report 2002 launching yesterday that the BOI would beef up and focus its incentive package to maintain the country's attraction as an investment destination.

Domingo said the BOI was planning to be more discriminate in the grant of income tax holidays which meant that not all registered projects would be eligible for these tax breaks.

Also, Domingo has identified key investment areas—both large and small—that the government would promote for investments—electronics, automotive, mining, fruits, information technology services, garments, furniture, gifts and houseware. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

ctrl-alt-del

or simply switch.

Stop crashing. Come to Shangri-La Makati on September 24, 2002 and find out why it's time to switch. Apple

You don't have to crash, it's Time To Switch and you're invited.

Program Schedule

Morning Registration	8:30 am-9:00 am	Rizal Ballroom foyer area
Plenary Session	9:00 am-11:30 am	Rizal Ballroom A,B & C
Afternoon Registration	12:30 pm-1:00 pm	Rizal Ballroom foyer area
Animate Now!	1:00 pm-4:30 pm	Rizal C Ballroom
Driven by Design	1:00 pm-4:30 pm	Rizal A Ballroom
Xserve Live!	1:00 pm-4:30 pm	Makati A & B Function Room
Perfectly Focused	1:00 pm-4:30 pm	Rizal B Ballroom
Closing Remarks & Lucky Draw	5:00 pm-5:30 pm	Rizal Ballroom A & B

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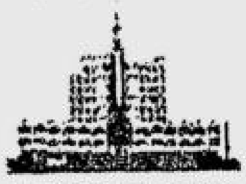

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Science and Technology—Bids and Awards Committee (DOST-Wide BAC) hereby invites interested contractors who are registered with PCAB with a project size and range of at least **"Medium A"** for building, to apply for eligibility and to bid in the forthcoming public bidding for the **Completion of Dormitory Building I of the Philippine Science High School Eastern Visayas Campus (PSHS-EVC).** The approved budget for the purpose is P6,938,827.50, chargeable against the general funds of PSHS-EVC, Palo, Leyte.

Only those eligible bidders evaluated by the DOST-Wide BAC shall be allowed to participate in the bidding.

All eligible bidders may secure the necessary documents on the following dates:

Issuance of Eligibility Requirements	September 20, 2002, Rm. 207 DOST Bldg. Gen. Santos Ave., Bicutan, Taguig
Submission of Eligibility Requirements	September 26, 2002 until 5:00 p.m. at Rm. 207, DOST Bldg., Gen. Santos Ave. Bicutan, Taguig
Issuance of plans and other bidding documents	October 1, 2002 at PSHS-EVC, c/o Ms. Cynthia Ocaña
Pre-bid Conference I	October 8, 2002, 10:00 a.m., Conference Rm. PSHS-EVC (Palo, Leyte)
Opening of bids	October 22, 2002; 10:00 a.m. Conference Rm. PSHS-EVC (Palo, Leyte)

Prospective bidders may surf our DOST website addressed at: http://www.dost.gov.ph. Eligible bidders may secure plans and other bidding documents upon payment of P5,000.00 non-refundable at PSHS Eastern Visayas Campus.

The DOST-Wide BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any formality and make an award to the bidder whose bid proposal is the lowest calculated responsive bid and advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) JOCELYN G. ALVARADO
Assistant Secretary and Chairperson, DOST-Wide BAC

(PDI-Sept. 17 & 19, 2002)

Trans Co
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID AD NO. TRANSCO 2002-003

Bid Date : October 23, 2002-2:00 P.M.
Pre-Bid Conference : October 9, 2002-2:00 P.M.
(CMMS Project Office)

Supply, Delivery, Installation, Configuration and Commissioning of Stationary Single Cell Batteries, 600 Ampere-Hour (4 sets) and 900 Ampere-Hour (1set) @ 8 Hours Rate, Lead Acid or Lead Calcium Vented Type, 24 Cells per Set, 2.0 Volts DC per Cell connected in Series to form 48 Volt DC string

SOURCE OF FUNDING : FINANCED BY THE GOVERNMENT
APPROVED BUDGET FOR CONTRACT TO BE BID: P2,670,000.00

The following manufacturers/suppliers/distributors are invited to apply for eligibility and to submit sealed bids on the above to be opened publicly at CMMS Project Office, 2nd Floor, Bldg. 2, NPC-OBC, Quezon Ave. cor. Agham Rd., Diliman, Quezon City.

a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorship;
b. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines;
c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines;
d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., a group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract, provided that Filipino ownership thereof shall be at least sixty percent (60%); or
e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA).

Only Bids within the Approved Budget for Contract to be bid will be accepted.

Bidding documents are available on **September 16-27, 2002** upon payment of **P100.00** which is non-refundable. Issuance of bidding documents shall be from **9:00 A.M.** to **4:00 P.M.** and can be obtained from the **Office of the Manager, Materials Management Division-TRANSCO** from **Mr. Winifred Z. Gatus at Ground Floor, Building 2, National Power Corporation, BIR Road cor. Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines, Tel. Nos. 921-3479/924-5245, Fax Nos. 922-8432/924-5466.**

The Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any defect therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation.

(Sgd.) JOSE B. BRILLANTES
Manager, HRA-TRANSCO &
Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI - Sept. 15, 18, 19 & 22, 2002)

ERRATUM

In the ad of National Transmission Corp. Re: Invitation to apply for Eligibility and to Bid Ad No. Transco 2002-003, **Lead Acid or Lead Calcium Vented Type, should be 24 Cells per Set, 2.0 Volts DC per Cell connected in Series to form 48 Volt DC string** instead of 224 cells per set as printed.

Our Apologies

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OFC STF ALEX 09174925306

OFCSTF 09202545872 REXIE

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late LEONARDO C. AGUADO has been settled extrajudicially by his heirs per Doc#40; Page#9, Book#XVIII, Series of 2002 by Notary Public Angelo G. Medina of Pasig City
(PDI- Sept. 5, 12 & 19, 2002)

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MOTORING

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Family haulers of the 'middle' kind

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE MIDDLE child is the independent one, so goes a saying. It is also said that middle children don't get that much attention from their parents, compared to what the eldest and the youngest get.

Vehicles have the same family hierarchy, although not in the order of appearance, but according to size.

"Middle" vehicles are not too high, not too low, not too big and not too small. And, perhaps, not too expensive and not that cheap, either.

Somewhere in the middle of it all—not belonging to the vans, the conventional AUVs and the five-seater sedans—are elegant mini family haulers.

Do you have a growing family and you're just about ready to part with nearly P1 million? If you think vans are too big and sedans are too small, then "middle vehicles" should be just right for you.

WITH A V6 2.98 liter engine, the Chevy Venture yields a decent acceleration to power you from a stop and do well in passing situations.

EVEN with its supposedly 10-seating capacity and front wheel drive system, the new CR-V still retains its mini-SUV ride and drive.

THE NISSAN Serena Q-RV is a good, solid, reliable car for the growing family.

CR-V, the object of envy

Brisk sales of the Honda CR-V makes one agree that it is, indeed, selling like hotcakes. Since its April 24 launch, 3,162 units have been sold in just four months. Waiting time went as far back as four months. The line is moving, assures Honda, because production has been made "brisk."

The new CR-V, with its two-liter DOHC i-VTEC engine, is also "brisk" in the sense that it drives too sporty for a family vehicle. It makes you wonder why Honda would put a sporty engine in a family vehicle.

Honda's stroke of genius is evident with the new CR-V's outer design. Its supposedly added seating capacity, said to be a 10-seater from the original five, didn't change its exterior look much. The new CR-V also retains its mini-SUV ride and drive. The acceleration is still there.

The difference lies below. It's now a front wheel drive vehicle compared to the original all-wheel drive, and subsequently the price has been slashed to P959,000 for the automatic and P899,000 for the manual (the CR-V originally fetched over P1 million).

Original owners of the CR-V must now feel a tinge of regret. They must be thinking they ate their marshmallows too soon and now they won't get any second helpings, unless they have money to spare.

You get owl-like frontal vision with the new CR-V—the steering wheel and dashboard are set low enough so it won't disturb your vision (especially for "shorties").

The manual stick shift, however, is too short and knobby, like an irritating stubble rubbing against your skin. It requires quite a stretch for vertically challenged drivers. The acceleration feels a bit jerky with the manual, but the automatic transmission's smoother.

Inside you'll find a flat floor to give passengers' feet more relaxed foot space. There's no tape deck, though. This seems to be the trend in this CD and MP3 age. The tape deck is being discarded in many new cars.

As always, Honda's LCD stereo panel display is still eye catching. But designers forgot the cup holders for the front seat passengers. The rear view mirror should have been wider, for a broader back vision.

We think Honda should be more cautious in claiming the CR-V's actual seating capacity. Technical staff at Honda claim it can squeeze in 10 people. But butt space is relative. The space occupied by a 250-lb person is different from that occupied by a 110-lb person.

There is, however, one absolute in Honda's claim: the three-year or 100,000-km warranty.

Serena's mobile cinema

Averaging sales of 150 units per month, Q-RV Serena accelerates too swiftly for a family hauler, like the CR-V. With its two-liter engine displacement and a sporty engine type called SR 20, the Q-RV can race as smooth and as fast as a regular sedan even if there are 10 passengers inside enjoying a movie.

The Q-RV R Limited (automatic transmission) has a mobile VCD entertainment system with an overhead flip-down screen and a six-disc audio/video CD changer. It also has separate seats with armrests.

Its manufacturer claims a fuel consumption (highway driving) of 12 km/liter for the automatic and 13 km/liter for the manual; and 10 km/liter AT and 11 km/liter for the manual (city driving).

Its designers were thoughtful enough to put vanity mirrors on the two sun visors and have made the second and third row seats easy to fold. The long slide rails allow the rear seats to carry loads of stuff, even an entire drum set.

Cup holders are located at the front and back, cubby holes are in the middle and the cargo net is at the backmost portion.

It has the standard airbag for the driver, wide-angle side mirrors, a backup sensor and large headlamps. Sliding doors on both sides of the vehicle make for easy entry and exit. Parents, as always, should be extra careful of sliding doors when small children get on and off.

Both rear side windows can be opened vertically for ventilation.

The legroom isn't as wide as its American counterparts, but the space is just enough for Asian sizes.

It claims it can seat 10 people, but the backmost portion of the Serena has two tiny seats that's, well, too tiny, and not ideal for long hauls for burly guys (and gals). And then, try watching a movie in a moving vehicle with your head turned to the side for 10 straight hours. You'd feel grumpy, too.

The Q-RV manual is priced at P970,000 for the manual transmission and P1.160 million for the AT. And you can drive "serene" for three years, what with its three-year or 100,000-km warranty, whichever comes first.

Mild mannered Venture

Just like Clark Kent, the American Chevy Venture is mild mannered and has a good solid handle. It is smooth to drive and you can really feel its heavy body gliding through potholed streets.

A heavy body means heavy acceleration, as well. You have to push the pedal to the metal to get the acceleration you want. The manufacturer says it can sprint from zero to 100 kph in 16 seconds. Well, that's "gone in 60 minutes" for you.

But it's a family van, so this is not exactly the type of car you'd want to convert into a drag racer. The 2.98-liter V6 engine Chevy Venture has a generous legroom at the front (1,013 mm), middle (991 mm) and rear (932 mm), and makes it a "big brother" among other mini family haulers.

The driver would feel like driving a "pug-nosed" van. But then, he would realize the Venture has a muzzle. So, for new drivers of the Venture, don't tailgate with your vehicle.

Averaging sales of 80 units per month, the Chevy Venture's automatic transmission variant averages 8.5 km/liter.

The Venture features dual airbags at the front and safety belts for all 10 passengers. It packs extra hauling power with its V6 engine.

Like the Serena, it has dual sliding doors. But unlike the Serena, the Venture makes it harder for its owners to fold the seats at the back.

Also known as Venture in the United States, its direct competitors there are the Honda Odyssey, Chrysler Town and Country, Dodge Caravan and Ford Windstar.

The Venture is priced at P1.19 million, but offers only a two-year or 50,000-km warranty. It has a genuine Chevy badge which Chevy loyalists in the country can proudly carry. And that's probably enough "warranty" for the Venture buyer.

Clean future for the car?

SINDELFINGEN, Germany—Unlike the sleek and snarling Mercedes coupés screaming around DaimlerChrysler's test track, the lowly Chrysler "Town and Country" mini-van consumes neither petrol nor diesel. It runs on soap.

The plain white mini-van does not have the Mercedes' looks, its power steering is broken and the acceleration is leisurely—but as it arcs round the banked curve of the circuit at Sindelfingen near the south German city of Stuttgart, this everyday vehicle may be the car of the future.

In tubes and tanks under the chassis, something very like soapy water mixed with hydrogen called sodium borohydride and similar to borax found in laundry detergent, is being tested as one of the latest ideas to power a car with a fuel cell.

Fuel cells use hydrogen and oxygen to make electricity and water. Add an electric motor and you can build a car which emits no pollutants.

That makes them an attractive alternative to fossil fuels which, in vehicles, produce a tenth of the carbon dioxide contributing to global warming and a range of other pollutants which give rise to acid rain, smog and respiratory diseases.

Some have heralded hydrogen as the energy of the future, but skeptics say it will always be just that—a future fuel which for a host of reasons never makes it out of test cars.

One problem is that hydrogen is difficult to store—as a gas it is very bulky and in liquid form it needs to be kept at 253 degrees Celsius.

The DaimlerChrysler "Natrium" vehicle on the test track at the firm's Sindelfingen factory gets round this by storing the hydrogen as sodium borohydride, a non-toxic solution that can be pumped in and out of the vehicle safely and cleanly.

The van can travel 500 km on one tank, has a top speed of 130 kph and feels like any other car to drive.

Unlike hydrogen, the sodium borohydride "fuel" is non-flammable and relatively compact. When brought into contact with a ruthenium cobalt catalyst, one of the platinum group metals, it gives off hydrogen which is fed to the fuel cell.

The spent solution, sodium borate, is pumped back to the fuel tank and separated from the fresh fuel by a bladder. At the fuel station, it is pumped out, replaced with fresh sodium borohydride, and can then be recycled.

The process was developed by Millennium Cell , a tiny US company set up to market the technology.

Ingenious though it is, there are still some teething problems, said Bernard Robertson, a senior vice president in charge of engineering technologies at DaimlerChrysler.

At present, a "stabilizer" chemical has to be added to the sodium borohydride, which makes it very alkaline and causes it to lose its non-toxic status. There are also problems recycling the spent sodium borate cleanly.

"The objective was to prove the principle, and then refine it," said Robertson. *Reuters*

Livelihood scheme to perk sales of motorbike

By Charles E. Buban

THE KARGADOR 150 is Kymco's flagship model for its livelihood program. An employee only needs to pay P2,949.31 a month at a 36-month installment plan.

A NEW livelihood program initiated by SC Kymco Pilipinas may boost the country's motorcycle industry. Several companies have already taken advantage of the scheme, which offers no down payment for the motorcycles or scooters that their employees can avail of through salary deduction.

Under the livelihood program, a partner bank designated by Kymco provides a financial package to interested companies that will endorse their employees' loans.

"The company doesn't need to shell out anything. The bank will just ask the company for its financial statements, including a profile of its officers. Once the identity is established, the bank will just require them to authorize a deduction from the employee's monthly salary, designate co-makers or present a certification of retirement benefits for employees without co-makers. As long as the company is in good standing, facilitation is easy," assured Kymco vice president for sales Valentino Curamen.

For companies that don't want to make an endorsement, the bank will require a little more to ensure that the interested employee has enough salary to pay for the monthly amortization, which ranges from six to 36 months at 1.5 percent interest rate.

"When we conceived this livelihood program, we thought of ways how to help employees earn extra income. A motorcycle can be used for business while scooters can be used to and from the office," said Kymco vice president for operations Gilbert Limjoco.

"We can give them computations on how much savings or earnings they can get if they avail of the livelihood program," he added

All models

The Kymco Livelihood Program is applicable to all Kymco motorcycles and scooter models including Kargador 150, Stryker 150, TopBoy 100, Apex Dink 150, Cruiser 125, People 150, Vivio 150, Bet&Win 250, Pulsar 125 and Spike 125. Kymco is a worldwide motorcycle brand. It is manufactured in Taiwan. SC Kymco Pilipinas is its exclusive manufacturer and distributor in the Philippines.

"We recommend the Kargador 150, which is designed for tricycle use. It's built to handle heavy abuse with its thicker frames, angular swing arm, heavy duty chain adjuster, larger fuel tank, stainless steel front and rear fenders, stiffer springs and stronger shock absorbers. This model is worth the investment," said Limjoco.

Kymco has started provincial tours to introduce the livelihood program. Last month it went to several provinces in Luzon and Central Visayas to entice corporate clients.

"We also targeted companies within the export processing zones in Subic, Mariveles and Mactan. The feedback was very positive because the program went well with their employees' benefit programs," reported Curamen. "And we have parts storage and after-sales service support that we provide to our customers."

Eventually, Kymco hopes the program will boost motorcycle and scooter sales in the country. Market demand for motorcycles is a low 200,000 per year compared to Indonesia's 2.5 million, Thailand's 1 million and Vietnam's 1.9 million.

India, Sri Lanka at Motorshow Int'l

By Jun Alano
Contributor

TAKING advantage of trade opportunities in the automotive parts and accessories industries in the Philippines, the embassies of India and Sri Lanka have decided to join this year's Motorshow International (Philippines) where they hope to forge closer trade and economic ties with local and foreign firms taking part in the five-day exhibit.

Marisa Nallana, Motorshow director general, said the participation of the two South Asian neighbors in Motorshow confirms the growing trend toward intra-Asian trade, the region being home to over half the world's population and considered the most dynamic economic hub.

Nallana said that in particular, the Indian Embassy, which is joining Motorshow for the first time, would set up an information service about the Indian auto industry during the exhibit which will run from Oct. 2-6 at the World Trade Center on Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City.

Aside from the information service, the Indian Embassy booth would also conduct briefings to interested parties on how to enter the lucrative Indian market, the second biggest in the world next to China.

The Sri Lankan Embassy, on the other hand, said it will showcase mostly rubber products. It is one of the top rubber producers in the world and is currently the world leader in the production of solid tires for off-road vehicles.

The Sri Lankan Embassy is a regular Motorshow participant, having joined at least two previous editions of the annual exhibit actively promoting trade relations and investment opportunities as well as exploring the Philippine market for possible distribution for the country's automotive and industrial products.

Nallana said this year's Motorshow will not only focus on car and motorcycle exhibits but would also veer toward helping local and foreign companies understand the current global trade environment and the concerns of automotive industry players with regard to government policies.

Now on its 13th season, Motorshow is considered the country's premier auto and cycle exhibition, and lists among its annual participants the biggest and most important players in the automotive and allied industries. It is organized by the Philippine Exhibits and Themeparks Corp. which Nallana also heads.

Inventions secure BMW group's potential

THE BMW Group's potential for the future can be expressed in concrete numbers: among more than 800 reported inventions by the staff of the BMW Group in 2001, approximately 570 patent applications were filed with the patent office in Germany.

These figures reflect the positive trend of the BMW Group's business data. In 2001, for instance, the number of patent applications rose by approximately 10 percent over the previous year's figure. In addition, patent applications are filed by and are granted to partner companies and suppliers whose development activities are closely linked to the BMW Group.

With an effective international research and development network, the BMW Group is optimally equipped for the future.

Innovative answers to questions and new ideas are bundled in an intelligent network so customers can benefit from them in the fastest possible time.

Cars of the future

The core of this network is the BMW Group Research and Innovation Center based in Munich, Germany with around 6,000 staff members.

This is where engineers, in the areas of full-scale engineering development and vehicle research, work on the cars of tomorrow and beyond in close collaboration with their colleagues in technology centers in strategically important locations. These locations include three in California: the BMW Technology Office in Palo Alto in Silicon Valley, the BMW Design Works Center in Newsbury Park and the BMW Emission Testing and Control Center in Oxnard.

In these places, where standards are set in the fields of electronics, design and emission, the BMW Group is present to make full use of developments for the automotive industry.

It is for this reason that these three facilities are referred to as the "California Innovation Triangle."

In search of a race track

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

HONG KONG—There are five golf courses in or near Hong Kong, but no race track for motorcars. This is the lament of Dr. Laurence L.T. Hou, vice president of the Hong Kong Automobile Association (HKAA), chair for six years of the HKAA Motor Sport Council, medical consultant of many a Macau Grand Prix and other motor sport events and an avid believer in the formative values of go-kart racing.

A pathologist by profession who went to medical school in London, Dr. Hou was an amateur race driver in his youth and even attended a course in Formula One racing in Yorkshire, England. Upon his return to Hong Kong in 1970, Dr. Hou joined the Hong Kong Kart Club organized by race driver Albert Poon and Henry Lee. He became the club's medical officer, a position he occupies up to the present. For 18 years, he was also the HKKC's chair, having succeeded Poon when he retired from the motor sports scene.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Manila had an active go-kart association headed by Dodo Ayuyao. The Manila and Hong Kong go-kart racers set up an annual interport karting event. Dr. Hou remembers going to Manila twice a year for two reasons: the interport karting race and to play golf at Wack Wack, Valley Golf Club and Puerto Azul.

But when Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. was assassinated in 1983, the interport go-kart racing series abruptly ended.

Crowd drawer

In the Crown Colony, the go-kart motor sport was a crowd drawer whenever the Hong Kong International Kart Race was held every year at Victoria Park at the end of the world karting season. Professional go-kart racers who later graduated to Formula One racing, such as Michael Schumacher, would come to Hong Kong to compete, Dr. Hou remembers.

But after 24 years, the annual international event was stopped in 1993 because of complaints about noise pollution.

Go-karting was moved to an airstrip outside Hong Kong on weekends, but when Vietnamese refugees deluged the Crown Colony, the airstrip was converted into a refugee camp. Go-karters were deprived of a race track and motor sports fell dormant, a situation that continues to this day in the Special Autonomous Region (SAR) of China.

Roar of engines

"There is a small fun track for electric cars at the old Kai Tak airport," Dr. Hou says.

"Since electric cars are used, there is silence and no pollution but there is no fun, either. You need the roar of engines and the smell of burned petrol for an exciting atmosphere and the urge to drive."

On the other hand, motor sport is becoming popular in mainland China. Karting tracks have mushroomed in China and a new one is being built in Guangzhou, Dr. Hou says. He now tests and inspects 14 race tracks in the mainland and in Macau, including a Formula 3 track in Zhouhai.

"The government in China leases land to karters for 50 years," Dr. Hou says. "But in Hong Kong, land is leased for only 10 years and it is very expensive."

Buying land in the SAR for a race track is out of the question, he says, because the price is too high.

Dr. Hou estimates that a karting track meeting FIA (Federation Internationale de l'Automobile) standards would require at least four hectares and this would cost at least HK$12 million (US$1,548,387).

Building a 1 kilometer-long, 8 meter-wide karting track will cost an additional HK$1 million, excluding the other facilities and equipment needed by a racetrack.

"Hong Kong has the historical background, the drivers, the engineers, the technology and the enthusiasm," Dr. Hou asserts, "but no race track. We have more than 50 amateur go-kart racers, 20 of whom have FIA racing licenses and compete abroad. Out of these 50, 10 are juniors aged 11 to 17."

Fast reflexes

Dr. Hou believes strongly in starting them young. He wants youngsters to acquire good driving techniques and fast reflexes on the karting track so that when they grow up into adults and drive on public roads, safety is ingrained and they already know the dangers of certain maneuvers and how to avoid accidents.

"Many race drivers, including Formula drivers, began their careers as go-karters when they were kids," Dr. Hou says. "Youngsters learn faster, adults are hard to train because their minds and habits are set."

The problem, Dr. Hou thinks, is that people think a go-kart is a super toy for children like bump cars in amusement parks.

"Nothing will change as long as Hong Kong does not have its own track. My dream is to have a multipurpose race track, sections of which can be used for different events: motorcar racing, motorcycles, karting, bicycles, roller skating, paraplegics' wheelchair racing, anything on wheels."

For this, Dr. Hou is talking to the government's Leisure and Recreation Department, the government agency in charge of the Road Safety Campaign and the Hong Kong Tourist Association. Good luck, Dr. Hou!

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Choosing the right diesel for your car

BAD car emission remains the common cause of air pollution considering the volume of private-owned and public utility vehicles that continue to spew harmful smoke into the environment.

In Metro Manila, vehicle emissions account for more than half of the 6,000 tons of particulates, che-micals and other pollutants released daily into the air. This means that to alleviate the worsening problem of air pollution, ways of combating smoke belching must be seriously considered. As it is, Metro Manila's air has been tagged as one of the five most polluted in the world by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Environment Program.

Concerned motorists can do their part by choosing the right kind of fuel. For those with diesel-fed vehicles, there's Petron Diesel Max. This environment-friendly fuel is capable of drastically reducing the black smoke emission that is a telltale sign of an inefficient vehicle. It is equipped with a combustion improver that promotes better and more efficient burning, thereby reducing the level of smoke and tailpipe emissions.

Petron Diesel Max has a multifunctional additive that provides several functions and benefits.

Let us stay, car auctioneers urge GMA

By Charles E. Buban

AMID mounting pressure to halt the auction of imported secondhand vehicles, Subic Bay auctioneers appealed to Malacañang and reiterated their stand on why their operations should not be stopped.

In a letter to the Palace, the Association of Philippine Auctioneers (APA) asked for President Macapagal-Arroyo's support and pleaded that it be allowed to operate freely.

The Bureau of Customs (BoC) had previously tightened up on the release of imported secondhand vehicles from Subic due to complaints by the domestic automotive industry that the importation of these vehicles is a major factor in the sales slump of the major automotive players in recent years.

But while the Subic importers obtained an injunction stopping the BoC from enforcing strict regulations, the BoC continued to hold on to their shipment by requiring them to get an importation authority which the Department of Trade and Industry-Bureau of Import Services has refused to give pending the release of the new importation guidelines.

Against free enterprise

"We believe that banning the importation and auctioning (of secondhand vehicles) in the country will not solve anything because it goes against the principle of free enterprise and the government's thrust for trade liberalization," said APA president Romulo Armamento. "It's rather unfair to blame us because our only objective is to provide consumers a wider selection of products at prices they can afford."

Armamento was referring to the recent move of the DTI recommending to the President the signing of an executive order banning the importation of secondhand vehicles.

"This industry needs to survive, too. If there are flaws, we ask the government to exercise some degree of leniency and review the existing rules. After all, these laws are created to promote and safeguard the welfare of the majority and not just to protect the interests of a few. We feel that some of the laws affecting us, particularly Republic Act 8506 which bans the importation of right-hand-drive vehicles, are no longer appropriate given the present economic conditions."

With local cars

In the letter, APA stressed that its business should be allowed to co-exist with local vehicle assemblers, just like in other countries.

"Like local assemblers, our industry also creates jobs, generates taxes and encourages the growth of many other related industries," explained Armamento. "Essentially, our position is in line with the Trade Liberalization Law and the Foreign Investments Act which, among others, emphasize the free flow of goods and services in the global economic market."

The letter also raised several issues before the President:

- The secondhand vehicle auction industry employs an estimated 120,000 Filipinos not only in Zambales, Bataan and Pampanga but also in the Visayas and Mindanao through allied industries like stevedoring, reconditioning, retouching, air-conditioner installation, engine check-up and others.
- The importation industry has generated billions of pesos worth of revenue for the government by way of taxes and duties and port charges and rentals to the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.
- The industry has been instrumental in the infrastructure development of local government units which have participated in several biddings. Two-thirds of secondhand vehicles sold during auctions include trucks, buses, bulldozers, tractors, backhoes, cement mixers and even firetrucks which are bought by LGUs or by contractors chosen by LGUs. In fact, 90 percent of all heavy construction equipment in the country comes from these auctions.
- The auctioneers have already made clear their position through a series of hearings in the House ways and means committee headed by Zambales Rep. Antonio Diaz and they have the support of the Vice Mayors League of the Philippines.
- Unreserved auctions of secondhand vehicles cater mostly to buyers with limited budget or to sectors that need to minimize their investment outlays like contractors, haulers, farmers and fish dealers. As a result, these groups can charge low fees to their end-users while remaining competitive and profitable.
- Vehicles sold in these auctions go through a quality control system to ensure safety and road worthiness.

Tests and inspections

"Vehicles sold in auctions also go through the scrutiny of the Land Transportation Office through its Motor Vehicle Inspection Section (MVIS), which checks, among others, emission control, headlight alignment and conversion compliance," said Dominic Sytin of United Auctioneers Inc., an APA member. "The conversion kits we now use for repositioning (to transfer the steering wheel from the right to the left) is a far cry from the ones used almost 30 years ago."

To comply with the government's Clean Air Act, APA also requires vehicles applying for registration to secure a Certificate of Compliance to Emission Standards from the Department of Transportation and Communication after passing the MVIS.

Sytin added that APA is negotiating with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) to certify its mechanics who will do the conversion.

"We need to assure the public that we are also serious with what we are doing and that like all vehicle assemblers we make sure our vehicles meet consumers' standards and requirements," Sytin said.

The unreserved truck and equipment auction system was introduced in the country by Ritchie Brothers Auctioneers Ltd. during the early '90s. RBA is a Canadian firm which operates auction houses in almost every major city worldwide. Subic was its base of operations in Southeast Asia until it decided to transfer to Singapore when the economy took a downturn.

In less than five years, car auction has evolved into a major industry that can greatly impact on the country's economy.

There are at present four auction companies in the country—Asia International Auctioneers, United Auctioneers, Auction in Malinta and Auctionline—all members of APA.

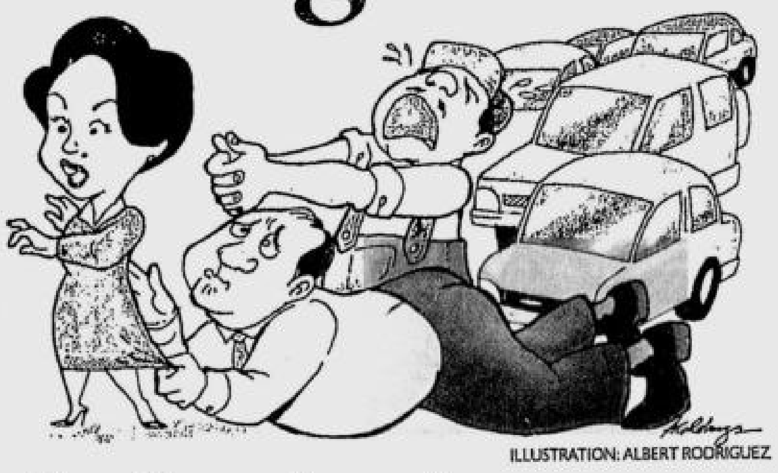

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Secondhand or firsthand car?

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

HOLD on to your money? Up to next month?

Maybe yes.

You know why?

Industry insiders told me last week there would be big bargains coming up next month.

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Better yet, call your dealers now. They are just about ready to give you a low down on what to expect next month from the motoring industry.

Good luck.

* * *

I continue to receive this most basic question from would-be buyers of cars.

Which is best, the secondhand or the brand new?

My answer would always be: It depends.

* * *

If you don't have money for the brand new car, fine. Go for the secondhand. Nothing wrong there.

My advice, though, is you should have a firm knowledge of the secondhand you are going to buy.

Do you know the owner? Are you close to the owner? In short, is he/she close to you? Or, if not, is your bridge to the owner of the car really that close to you?

* * *

Always, the secret to a secondhand car is the owner.

Is he/she honest enough as to say the car to be sold was never involved in an accident as to cause a major damage to the vehicle?

That's the most important aspect of a secondhand car: its history.

Has its engine suffered a major defect? Has it been overhauled already? If yes, how many times?

* * *

The kilometer reading (mileage) can be deceiving. Again, the secret here is the owner.

If you honestly believe you know the owner well, he/she will not fool you. He/she will tell you the real story behind the car.

* * *

I have sold cars of my own. For every sale, there's always that tinge of sadness. A car, like all properties that we own, will always occupy a special place in your heart. At least that applies to me.

Of all (knock on wood) the cars that I've sold, I have yet to receive a complaint from my buyers. Well, the reason is, I know my buyers well; they know me that well, too.

As always, telling the truth is the key to a lasting friendship.

And cars can be good tools, too, to maintaining a sincere friendship.

* * *

Now to buying new cars.

There's no substitute to buying a new car. It's the best feeling, particularly if you are a first time owner of a brand new car.

The trick is, you need to have the money. If you can barely eke out a living, or have "some money" that is not enough to buy a brand new car, don't touch it. Save that money. Never use it as down payment. It will only give you a lifetime headache. Better yet, use it as down payment for a house and lot.

If you have a house and lot already, then buying a car could be your next target.

But then, if you are paying a monthly amortization for your house and lot, that's another matter. It could be too draining to your pocket if you think of acquiring a car on an installment basis. Two properties on installment basis can make life triple hard for you. Be kind to your heart. We only have one heart.

Never mind the rich. That's why they're called the filthy rich because many of them treat money as "dirt."

They'd rather spend on cars rather than give to the dirt poor.

That's why more poor folks say "wotta life" than the rich folks.

* * *

QUOTE ME. **Don't gamble driving through floods. It will cause you more harm than good.**

The Circuit

FERRARI TAKES ONE & TWO IN MONZA

Rubens Barrichello led his teammate Michael Schumacher home last Sunday for an emotional win at Ferrari's home race in Italy. For Rubens, it was his third win of the year, but more importantly, many of his rivals for second place in the championship failed to finish. This greatly assisted the Brazilian's quest for second place. Meanwhile, Michael broke another record, this time for most points scored in a season, 128. And there are still two races to go.

Following a noisy podium ceremony and traditional dousing in champagne, Shell's Global Motorsport Business Manager, David Barnes said, "Monza was a high speed race, the fastest of the year. There was also a high attrition rate as we have seen last Sunday with many people failing to finish. Rubens broke the lap record last Sunday so there was no denying our speed, but the Shell oil we provided the team also protected both engines superbly. Of course the trick in Formula One is to skirt as close as possible to the edge without falling off. I think we proved rather emphatically last Sunday that we got the balance spot on."

The race was a busy affair from the moment the lights went out. Pole-sitter Juan Pablo Montoya lost his lead to teammate Ralf Schumacher but the Columbian managed to stay ahead of the charging Ferrari of Rubens Barrichello. Rubens was in third, having passed Michael in the long drag down to the first chicane. Ralf set about trying to establish a lead whilst Rubens sat tight on the tail of Montoya. However, the two soon caught up with Ralf as he slowed with technical trouble in the Parabolica corner, allowing both to pass. As Juan Pablo and Rubens sailed past the ailing Williams, Rubens seized the opportunity and made the most of Montoya's lost momentum. He took the lead at the next corner with a superbly timed overtake.

Not to be outdone, the following lap, Michael Schumacher also passed Montoya, along the long main straight for second place. Ferrari now held the top two spots in the Italian Grand Prix and the fans went wild with delight. Other drivers fairing well were Jaguar's Eddie Irvine who had made the most of his fifth place on the grid and was holding fifth on the track too and Alan McNish who had got his Toyota up to sixth spot. Twenty laps into the race and along came the first round of pit stops. Both Ferrari cars pitted well, and although Michael briefly surrendered his second place to Montoya, the German regained second position when the Williams pitted. The next ten laps saw a series of retirements as Monza's killer straights and kerbs began to take their toll on the machinery and drivers. Kimi Raikkonen retired with a blown engine and Montoya's Williams was retired following a hard crunch with one of the kerbs.

This left the Ferraris pit again and drive home to one of the most passionate and emotional victories Formula One can remember. Rubens and Michael slowed the pace to preserve their cars, whilst behind them, Eddie Irvine was holding his hard-fought third place. The Ferraris crossed the line together with their team lining the wall to greet them home. The grandstands were bathed in red flags, caps and banners as the cars came back round to parc fermé. As for the noise when the drivers got out, it was almost as deafening as the race itself. Rubens and Michael were joined on the podium by Ferrari old-boy Eddie Irvine. Filling out the points were Jarno Trulli, Jenson Button and Olivier Panis. As the crowds file out of the Autodromo last Sunday, the air is thick with songs and cries of "Forza Ferrari". For the team, a moment of celebration before the garage was packed away and they prepare for the US Grand Prix in two weeks time.

2002 FORMULA ONE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

(After 15 Grand Prix Races)

DRIVER STANDINGS	
M. SCHUMACHER	128
BARRICHELLO	61
MONTOYA	44
R. SCHUMACHER	42
COULTHARD	37
RAIKKONEN	20

TEAM STANDINGS	
FERRARI	189
WILLIAMS	86
McLAREN	57
RENAULT	20
SAUBER	11
JORDAN	8

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Each week, a viewer's question related to cars and motoring gets answered on Auto Extreme. You can get a hard copy every Thursday in the Motoring section of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

WHAT is "turbo lag?" When does it happen and how can it be prevented?

—Gilbert Reyes

Turbo chargers use wasted energy to create even more energy. Instead of the exhaust exiting the car, it is directed through the turbo's impeller which needs to spin at a tremendous speed to compress the air going into the motor. More compressed air causes greater combustion and leads to more power.

The important point here is this: turbos need enough exhaust gas in order to spin at those incredible speeds. Which means that if you don't have sufficient quantities of exhaust gas to turn the impeller, you don't create the boost. Which leads us to turbo lag.

Say you're cruising along at about 2000 rpm and you suddenly floor the throttle. The exhaust gets directed through your turbo but the problem is, at that speed, there isn't much exhaust coming out—definitely not enough to get your turbo spinning madly to create the boost you want. So a few engine revs have to go by so you could raise enough exhaust for the turbo to spool o r spin up to speed. That moment or two of waiting time between hitting the throttle and the creation of appreciable boost is what is known as turbo lag.

How to prevent it? Just make sure to give your turbo enough exhaust when it needs it. Some engine factors can affect turbo lag, such as air ducting and intercoolers.

As far the driver factor is concerned, if you feel that there may soon be a sudden need for serious thrust, downshift until your engine speed is at least 3000 rpm. This way, there will be noticeable boost almost as soon as you hit full throttle.

Republic of the Philippines
COURT OF TAX APPEALS
4th Floor Hizon Building, 29 Quezon Avenue
Quezon City

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The *Court of Tax Appeals (CTA)* invites eligible suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply/delivery and installation of the following:

BID PROJECT (B.P.) No.	EQUIPMENT	SPECIFICATIONS	QUANTITY	TOTAL APPROVED BUDGET	MINIMUM REQUIRED BID SECURITY
02-1	Generator Set	265 KVA, 220 – 440 Volts, 60 Hertz USA/UK/Japan made soundproof/weatherproof	One (1) set	P2,000,000.00	P50,000.00
02-2	Airconditioning Units (Package Type)	Split Package Type, Floor/Ceiling Mounted FCU with Matching ACCU 3.0 TR 2.0 TR 1.5 TR	 Two (2) Four (4) Eleven (11)	1,130,000.00	28,250.00
	Airconditioning Units(Package Type)	With master and temperature control, 2HP	Five (5)	150,000.00	3,750.00
02-3	Exhaust Fans	Ceiling Mounted Cassette Type, 24 CDE	Twenty-three (23)	138,000.00	3,450.00

Interested suppliers must submit to the CTA Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretary, **Ms. Elsie T. Forteza**, at the Administrative Division, 4th Floor, Hizon Bldg., 29 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, the following documents, namely: Letter of Intent, clear photocopies of DTI or SEC Registration, updated Mayor's Permit/Municipal License, Taxpayer's Identification Number, notarized statement of the prospective bidder that it is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation, VAT Registration, ITR duly stamped by the BIR and Audited Financial Report stamped received by the BIR for the two (2) recent years. Date of submission of the above requirements is on ***September 20, 2002 from 8:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.*** Bring originals for authentication of the photocopied documents.

Instructions to Bidders and other Bid documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretary upon submission of the above-mentioned documents and after payment of a non-refundable fee of five hundred pesos (P500.00) per Bid Project.

A **Pre-bid conference** will be held at the *CTA Courtroom* on **September 23, 2002** at 1:00 P.M., B.P. No. 02-1; on **September 24, 2002** at 1:00 P.M., B.P. No. 02-2; **September 25, 2002** at 1:00 P.M., B.P. No. 02-3.

Submission of Bid documents to the Office of the BAC Secretary shall be from 8:00 to 11:00 A.M. on **October 8, 2002** for B.P. No. 02-1; **October 9, 2002** for B.P. No. 02-2; **October 10, 2002** for B.P. No. 02-3.

Opening of bids will be done in the presence of bidders' representatives at the *CTA Courtroom* at 1:30 P.M. on the same dates of submission of bids for each project.

The CTA BAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of their bids and neither guarantees that award will be made.

The Committee reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive defects or informalities therein, and to accept bids considered responsive and most advantageous/beneficial to the government.

(Sgd.) ELVESSA P. APOLINARIO
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Sept. 12 & 19, 2002)

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Republic of the Philippines
MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Metro Manila

INVITATION FOR CONSULTING SERVICES

The Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) invites eligible Filipino consulting firms duly registered with the Department of Trade and Industry or the Securities and Exchange Commission for the purpose of drawing a long list from which a selection shall be made for the provision of ***Consultancy Services on Revenue Assurance for NAIA Terminal 3*** for the MIAA.

The selected Consultant who shall be screened and evaluated by the MIAA Prequalification, Evaluation and Award Committee (MIAA-PEAC) in accordance with procedures of the NEDA Guidelines on the Procurement of Consulting Services for Government Projects (Implementing Rules and Regulations of Executive Order No. 164), shall assist the MIAA in maximizing the recording, tracking and reporting of all transactions of all sources of revenues within the Terminal Area. Such Consultant shall be responsible in reviewing the process in and around the collection of Airport Terminal Revenues, identify the key operational issues to maximize revenue collections, provide alternatives that will address the identified operational issues and develop high-level implementation plan to interface the MIAA's system with the NAIA Terminal 3 operator's system, specifically identifying the critical tasks required to enable the interface.

Consultants who wish to offer their services are requested to express their desire to do so and submit an official letter of intent together with their duly accomplished and notarized prequalification statements, as provided under Appendix A of the NEDA Guidelines, not later than **September 27, 2002** at the Pavements and Grounds Division, MIAA Engineering Building, MIA Road, Pasay City during official business hours only. Prequalificaiton Forms may also be secured from the Pavements and Grounds Division Office from **September 19** to **September 24, 2002.**

(Sgd.) **ELPIDIO L. MENDOZA**
Chairman
MIAA-PEAC

(PDI - Sept. 19 & 23, 2002)

INQUIRER
TRiViA
By BONG BARRAMEDA

More than just a hunch

Q. Why the word 'hunch' in 'hunchback'?

A. A *hunch* is an intuitive feeling or guess, an idea based on no facts or experience. Almost anyone at least once in his or her lifetime has had a hunch that has led to the making of a decision, a method of reaching a decision particularly true of gamblers. Deformed persons who have a 'hunch' or a 'hump' in the spine were mistakenly thought for many years to possess psychic powers. Their curved back was supposedly a sign of demonic affiliation, a league with the devil, which endowed them with foresight, the ability to predict the future. And so today, a flash of insight is said to be a *hunch.* Unfortunately, no one has even a hunch on the origin of word *hunch.*

For the Record. Having a hunch on your back is a malformation medically known as *kyphosis,* an abnormal bulging of the spine. The upper section of the normal spine curves outward; kyphosis is an exaggeration of the slight hump everybody has. The typical kyphosis victim is short, with a stopped-over look. Physicians admit the condition is idiopathic—meaning, its cause is unknown.

Ooops! Christianity did not create the word *amen.* It is originated in Egypt around 2500 B.C., and referred to Amon (or Ammon), the name of the highest Egyptian deity, who, at one time, was worshipped throughout the Middle East. As later cultures invoked the Roman god Jupiter with the exclamation "By Jove!" the Egyptians called on their deity: "By Amon!" The Hebrews borrowed the word, gave it new meaning ("truly, certainly"), and passed it on to the Christians.

WORD WATCH

Dasal : Tagalog corruption of the Spanish *rezar,* 'to pray.'

PDI – September 19, 2002

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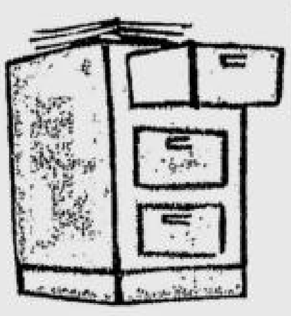

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on the First Death Anniversary
*of our dear "**Mommy and Lola Azon**"*

Dr. Corazon Valente Divino-Fontillas

of Botolan, Zambales

who peacefully passed away in the Grace of Our Lord on September 20, 2001

Holy Masses will be offered tomorrow, Friday, September 20, 2002 at the following churches:

Sta. Monica Church, Botolan, Zambales - 6:00 AM; **Iba Cathedral**, Iba, Zambales - 6:00 AM, **National Shrine of the Sacred Heart**, SAV, Makati - 6:00 AM;

Monasterio de Sta. Clara, Katipunan Ave., Quezon City - 6:00 AM, **St. Joseph Shrine**, Aurora Blvd., Project 3, Quezon City - 6:15 AM, **Parish of the Holy Sacrifice**, U.P., Diliman, Quezon City - 6:00 AM, **Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish**, Kamuning, Quezon City - 6:00 AM, **Sta. Maria Della Strada**, Katipunan Road, Quezon City - 6:00 AM, **Sto. Domingo Church**, Quezon Ave., Quezon City - 8:00 AM, **St. Joseph Convent**, Hemady St., New Manila, Quezon City - 6:00 AM, **Christ the King Seminary**, E. Rodriguez, Sr., Quezon City - 6:30 AM, **Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal**, Project 4, Quezon City - 6:00 AM;

Shrine of Our Lady of the Abandoned, Sta. Ana, Manila - 6:30 AM, **Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene**, Quiapo, Manila - 6:00 AM, **Sta. Cruz Parish Church**, Sta. Cruz, Manila - 8:00 AM, **Malate Catholic Church**, Malate, Manila - 6:00 AM, **Manila Cathedral**, Intramuros, Manila - 7:30 AM;

Passionist Monastery, Harlem Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, USA - 8:00 AM, **St. Francis Church**, Finchley Road, Torbay, Auckland, New Zealand - 7:30 AM, **Novena Church**, Thomson Road, Singapore - 7:00 PM

We, her loving husband, children and grandchildren request relatives, friends and pious readers to join us in our prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

DR. ENCARNACION V. JABSON-DEL ROSARIO

OF PASIG CITY

Joyfully returned to God, the Lord she loved and served faithfully.
25 MARCH 1912 - 15 SEPTEMBER 2002

Her bereaved children **Ma. Juanita** and **Patrick Mchale, Ma. Josefina, Ma. Lourdes, Dr. Quirino, Ma. Melinda**; grandchildren **April** and **Dan, Jade** and **James, Joyce** and **Jason, Jean** and **Robert, Carmina** and **Dennise, Romualdo III, Romualdo Benjamin, Candy, Alyssa May**; great grandchildren **Karl, Miguel, Agatha Clare, Kennedy, Jordyn, Mackenzie, Lawrence, Taylor**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the repose of her soul and to rejoice at her calling to eternal life.

Her family in heaven, husband **Dr. Romualdo**, sons **Romualdo, Jr.** and **Jose Ma.** welcome her home.

Her remains lie in state at the Arlington East Memorial Chapels, C. Raymundo Avenue, Caniogan, Pasig. The Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated on Saturday, 21 September 2002 at the Immaculate Conception Parish, Pasig at 1:00 p.m. Interment will follow at the Pasig Municipal Cemetery.

The Board of Trustees, Management,
and Staff of the

development academy of the philippines

are one in prayer with the family of

Ms. BERNADETTE P. DAILISAN

Managing Director, DAP sa Mindanao

She is survived by her father Simplicio
brothers Boyet, Mike, Noli and Imping.

Her remains lie in state at SIR Matina,
Davao City.

Interment will be announced later.

I am
the way,
the truth
and
the life.
No one
comes
to the
Father
except
through
Me.
John 14:6

NICANOR DE LEON ISON, JR.

Born April 5, 1925, in Parañaque City
A Veteran of World War II
Barrio Captain of Tambo, Parañaque for several years,
peacefully passed away in the Grace of our Lord,
on September 15, 2002, in San Pablo, California, U.S.A.
at the age of 77.

*Wife **Erlinda**; son **Bert**; daughter-in-law **Joy**; grandchildren **Adrienne, Nathan,** and **Jeremy**; daughter **Carmina**; son-in-law **Jetro**; and granddaughter **Leslie**, request relatives, friends, and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.*

SEGUNDINA BORGOÑA DEL ROSARIO

*Peacefully joined her husband **Francisco V. del Rosario***
in our Lord's loving embrace on September 15, 2002
at the age of 94.

She is survived by her children and their spouses **Junior** and **Lety, Sidring** and **Cora, Josephine** and **Virgil Nelson, Mariette** and **Dom Maglaya, Pepito** and **Masing, Arturo** and **Susan, Helen** and **Alejo** (†) **Sison**, and **Ame** and **Romy Aquino**; together with her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Interment will be on September 19, 2002 in Illinois, USA. A Memorial Mass and prayers shall be held on September 28, 2002 at 35 Coolidge, Greenhills West.

TERESA D. DE JESUS

Former Dean, College of Nutrition, College of the Holy Spirit
Former Faculty Member, Centro Escolar University
Former Faculty Member, Philippine Women's University
Former Faculty Member, University of the East
Board Member, Nutritionist-Dietitian Association of the Philippines

Peacefully passed away in the loving embrace of our Lord on September 17, 2002 at the age of 75.

Her bereaved brothers **Jose** and **Catalino de Jesus**, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Damar Chapel, Quezon City
(thru Sgt. Rivera Street - along A. Bonifacio or Araneta Avenue)

Funeral Mass and Cremation will be announced at the wake.

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Our Dearly Beloved

ANASTACIO M. LIMBO, JR.

of Cagayan de Oro City

Peacefully joined our Lord on September 16, 2002
at the age of 66.

His loving wife **Linda**; children **Noel, Alan, Kristine, Francis, David, Jasmine** and **Stephen** together with grandchildren; sisters **Griselda, Ruth** and **Ofelia**; relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapel, Marikina. Mass at 1:00 PM, Friday, September 20, 2002. Cremation will follow.

CARD OF THANKS

We, Evelyn, Toy, Linda, Bong, Carole, Marinette
and Teri, the family of the late

Jesus "Susing" Keyser Mercado, M.D.

February 14, 1912—August 18, 2002

and

Rosario "Cheng" Eleazar Peñalosa, B.S.N., R.N.

June 1, 1914—May 30, 2002

wish to convey our sincerest and heartfelt gratitude to our relatives, friends, and all those who sent condolences, flowers, donations, offered masses and prayers, visited and kept vigil, attended the services and cremation rites and those who helped and comforted us in so many ways during our time of bereavement.

Their going home to our Lord Jesus was a moment of grief. However, our loved ones, friends and colleagues like you, who spent time to assure us of the presence and love of God in our midst, made the grief easy to bear.

To you, we offer our deepest gratitude and our prayers for God's blessing in your life.

People, Events & Products

Aries Espinosa, Editor

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Nortel Networks achieves top 2001 global IVR market share

NORTEL Networks achieved no. 1 rank in both US and global market share for Interactive Voice Response (IVR) solutions in 2001, according to the recently published 2001 IVR market report by In-Stat. Based on the data, Nortel Networks led by a wide margin in ports shipped in both the US and worldwide. This news, coupled with the No. 1 ranking contact center market share as recently reported by InfoTech and Gartner Dataquest, further demonstrates the continued momentum for Nortel Networks enterprise technologies in self-service and agent-assisted customer contact applications.

"By focusing on delivering quick ROI, increased customer loyalty and advanced speech recognition applications to enterprise and service provider customers in these challenging economic times, Nortel Networks has increased their IVR sales in the United States and globally by over 60 percent in 2001," said Brian Strachman, senior analyst, Voice Solutions, In-Stat/MDR.

Nortel Networks Self-Service IVR, advanced speech, and voice portal solutions provide valuable benefits to business, their customers and employees by offering "anytime access" to information, such as account balances, schedules, locations, and product information. These solutions provide a wealth of accurate, consistent information without the frustration of wasted time and delays. Additionally, with automation of many transactions that free employees from tedious, repetitive tasks, valuable human resources can be re-vectored to more strategic business services.

"Nortel Networks Voice Portal Solution and Customer Contact Center business had a tremendous year in 2001," said Vicki Marvich, director, customer contact and voice portal solutions, Nortel Networks. "Our momentum in the IVR market is due to the impact our solutions have on our customers' business, driving their customer loyalty through accessible services 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

More businesses are incorporating advanced speech recognition technologies into their IVR application – allowing them to automate functions that might otherwise be too complex for – or simply not practical with touch-tone inputs. Speech brings a natural flow to their interactions and callers perceive even higher satisfaction as they can accomplish more in a shorter timeframe while using a more natural method of interface/communication. Additionally, Nortel Networks was named the "Highest Revenue Contributor" by Nuance, an industry leader in speech recognition technology.

Stores Asia 2002
(NATIONAL RETAIL SUPPLIERS EXHIBITION)
JULY 17, 2002, EDSA

SMART BACKS PRA EVENT

Smart Communications marketing events manager Miles Inocentes shakes the hand of Philippine Retailers Association (PRA) chair Manuel M. Siggaoat shortly after signing an agreement for the 11th National Retailers Conference and Stores Asia 2002 Expo. The twin events were held recently at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City. Flanking Inocentes and Siggaoat are Smart marketing events officer Gericel Rodriguez (left) and conference co-chair Paul A. Santos. Looking on are PRA chair emeritus Samie Lim (left) and Roy Ordiales representing expo chair Mars Chua.

CPSP's 1st confab-expo

THE CORPORATE Planning Society of the Philippines (CPSP) will hold its first conference-expo for corporate planners on Sept. 19 and 20 at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila. Dubbed "Corplan: a New Mindset", the conference has gathered the largest pool of minds into this two-day event, covering the whole scope of corporate planning from financial and knowledge management to information technology and internal consulting. For more details, call the Corplan secretariat (Global Training Solutions Inc.) at 755-8828 or 755-8805.

National Panasonic
Sales

NATIONAL PANASONIC SUPPORTS QUOTA

In line with the continuing commitment to support worthy causes in the community, Dennis B. Aranas, GM for marketing of National Panasonic sales Philippines, presents a certificate of donation to Tess Gonzalez, president of Quota International Manila South (QIMS) for a National Refrigerator and a Panasonic TV set for QIMS' ambulatory room at the Cancer Institute of the Philippine General Hospital. This room will be used in administering chemotherapy to young indigent cancer patients treated on an outpatient basis. Looking on are QIMS secretary Teena Tinsay (left) and QIMS past president Butchay Africa.

RP to host 3rd Asean Insurance Congress

THE ASEAN Insurance Congress will be hosted by the Philippines for the first time, from Sept. 23 to 25, at the Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City.

The theme of the Congress is "Asean Insurance Markets: Gearing up for the Future." Local and foreign resource speakers will share their ideas on a broad range of topics, including developments in the Asean markets, new products and consumer trends, globalization and wealth management and information technology, among others.

The Congress is one of the major projects of the Asean Insurance Council, which was organized 26 years ago, four years after Asean itself was organized. The Council secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia. The life insurance and general insurance industries of each country, represented by the presidents of their respective associations, comprise the members of the Council.

Hosting of the Asean Insurance Congress is on rotation basis among member countries. The first two congresses were held in Thailand (1994) and Malaysia (1997).

For more information, interested parties can call the 3rd Asean Insurance Congress organizing committee care of Sylvia Amansec or Ana Lourdes Galarosa at 893-0311 or 812-1552.

ANTAS SIGNED INTO EXISTENCE

An agreement to form the Alliance on Neo-Traditional Advertising Systems (Antas) Inc. was recently signed by a group of advertising media practitioners engaged in the business of providing innovative outdoor/indoor displays to the advertising industry. Shown after signing the agreement are, from left, Judito B. Callao of Adstrat, Renato R. So of Power Media Strategies, Manuel J. Galvez of Moving Colors Inc., Joseph M. Hodreal Jr. of Mega Boards and Geraldine B. So of Power Sites and Signs. In forming Antas, the group aims to promote the growth and development of the neo-traditional advertising media/systems in the Philippines.

GYOZATEI OPENS GREENBELT OUTLET

Gyozatei Authentic Japanese Dumplings recently inaugurated its Greenbelt 1 branch, after a successful pilot outlet along Tomas Morato in Quezon City. The newly opened Greenbelt outlet is the second franchise outside of Japan, and can accommodate up to 50 customers. The inauguration, dubbed 'Palate and Poetry: A Taste of the Spoken Word,' was highlighted by poets from UST and was graced by Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay. Shown, from left, are Reynaldo C. Mendoza, chair and managing director of Gyozatei Philippines Corp., Cherry Mercado of ABS-CBN, TV personality Plinky Recto, writer and restaurateur Linda Panlilio, and Katzumi Suzuki, president of Gyozatei Japan Corp. at the ribbon-cutting ceremony during the launch.

Computer Univ

AMA JOINS E-DUTECH 2002

AMA Computer University, Asia's largest IT university, joins E-dutech 2002, the convergence of education events to be held from Sept. 18 to 21 at the SM Megatrade Hall, Mandaluyong City. The organizers are Edutech Trade & Services Corp., Meeting Points International and Philippine State Universities & Colleges Computer Education System Society. Shown during the contract signing are Angela C. Aguiluz (2nd from right), vice president and treasurer, AMA, and Sally J. Bernardo, project director of Edutech. At right is Johnny Ramos, VP-marketing, and Bong Rivera, events director, Edutech.

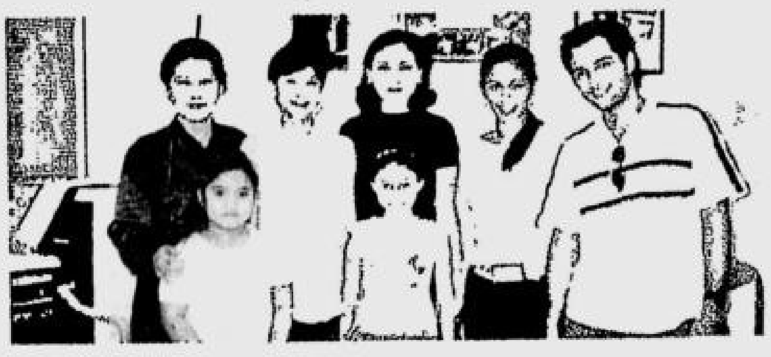
BITS Clips

Latin Grammies on E! Philippines

CATCH the 3rd Annual Latin Grammy Awards 2002 on E! Philippines live from the Kodak Theater in Hollywood today, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. (Manila time), with a rebroadcast at 8:30 p.m. tonight as presented by Globe Handyphone. Grammy and Latin Grammy-winning recording artist Gloria Estefan and Emmy Award winner actor Jimmy Smits will co-host the event. Live performers include Marc Anthony and Carlos Vives with Jon Secada, Daisy Fuentes and Nick Carter among the presenters. Leading the nominations is Colombian Carlos Vives and Celia Cruz. The live broadcast of the 2002 Latin Grammy Awards is made possible by Globe Handyphone, L'Oreal, Chikka, I-FM and Herword.com. E! Philippines can be seen on UHF Channel 31 and channels 64 on SkyCable, 58 on Home Cable, 16 on Destiny Cable and 14 on Dream.

Red Horse Muziklaban finals

FIVE lucky and deserving bands will be flown to Manila for the ultimate one-night band competition. The five lucky bands are Nora Aunor Fans Club of Pampanga, The Cowboyz of Davao, 18th Issue of Metro Manila, Midnight Sun of Legaspi and Last Train of Dumaguete. These bands are all psyched up for the ultimate music competition to be held on Sept. 20, 7 p.m. at Tomas Morato Street (near Hotel Rembrandt) for the national grand finals of Red Horse Muziklaban 2002. Comet's Tale, winner of last year's Red Horse Muziklaban, will share the stage with two of the country's hottest rock bands, Razorback and Slapshock. The winning band brings home P60,000 in cash and prizes, and will also be given the chance to record their very own album courtesy of Alpha Records. The bands' performance can also be heard on Magic 89.9 and NU 107 live.



ENDORSERS JOIN POULEX ANNIVERSARY

Molecules and Particles showed its all-out support for one of its provincial partners, Poulex Mall in Cabanatuan City, which celebrated the mall's anniversary recently. Young stars Karlyn Bayot (2nd from right) and Kristopher Peralta livened up the day with their song numbers and fun-filled games. Joining them after the show are, from left, Florencia Huibonhoa, board chair of Chas Realty and Development Corp., Denise T. Huibonhoa, leasing manager, and Veronique Huibonhoa, president.

Menopause management

THE PHILIPPINE Society of Climacteric Medicine (PSCM) will hold its 10th annual national convention on Sept. 19 and 20 at the Garden Wing Ballroom, Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City. Distinguished foreign speakers professor Unnop Jaisamran of Bangkok and professor Christopher Haines of Hong Kong have been invited as speakers. Local speakers PSCM president Dr. Corazon T. Lim and vice president and overall convention chair Dr. Santiago A. del Rosario will discuss pertinent topics related to menopause and its management. Call the PSCM secretariat through Ivy Nacman at 433-9776 for more details.

Marketing seminars

MANSMITH & Fielders Inc (723-6671, 722-2318) will hold two marketing seminars, "Negotiating and Influencing Skills for Marketing and Sales Executives" on Sept. 20 and 21 at the Mandarin Oriental Manila, and "Fundamentals of Marketing" from Sept. 25 to 27 at the Manila Galleria Suites. Through the first seminar, seminar speaker Rowen Untivero will teach participants how to face, recognize, and counter buyer ploys, apply seller gambits, and close deals guided by negotiation frameworks. Agora awardee Josiah L. Go keynotes the second seminar. He will teach marketing and sales staff how to increase their know-how in marketing and problem-solving skills. This seminar will also reveal the importance of knowing and understanding customers, the company, and the competition in order to achieve sales growth.

National confab on Clean Air Act

THE PHILIPPINE Society of Mechanical Engineers-Unified Chapters of Cebu (PSME-UCC), in cooperation with the DENR, DOST, and DILG, is spearheading the 1st National Conference on the Clean Air Act and Ecological Solid Waste Management Act Compliance to be held from Sept. 19 to 21 at the Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Convention Center, Lahug, Cebu City. The conference is focused on presenting technologies, processes and systems in order to comply with the new environmental laws. The gathering targets participants from government and non-government organizations, including the PSME chapters, PCAPI, and Pempa. For more information call the PSME-UCC offices at Cebu City (032)254-3998 and look for Libeth Solon-Awid or Joyce Batomalaque.

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'Pako,' the edible fern

By Eufemia C. Estrada
Contributor

HOMEMAKERS in search of a cheap source of Vitamin A need not go far. Though not as widely accepted in urban areas as *pechay*, *kangkong* and *camote* tops, *pako* is a familiar vegetable to our provincial sisters.

This edible fern is now more easily available in Metro Manila than it was when I was a kid; thanks to weekend markets like Tesda in Taguig and Sidcor in Cubao, QC, that traders from nearby provinces join.

I have not been going to Sidcor lately for fear that I might twist my foot and sprain my ankle walking on stony paths. (When will organizers make this market more customer-friendly?) I have not been able to ascertain if *pako* is available all year round or is seasonal.

Anyway, I have more than a passing acquaintance with *pako*.

There are two varieties of *pako* available in these two weekend markets: one dark green with a tight coil on top, and the light green variety with little or less pronounced coils.

Pako is usually blanched and served with vinaigrette. The only time I remember *pako* being served raw was in Lukban, Quezon, where it was served with fresh tomatoes, sliced onions, a vinaigrette and sardines. *Pako*, the daughter of the ex-mayor Tia Precy Baldovino told us, had been handpicked by their cook from the foot of Mt. Banahaw, and not from the market.

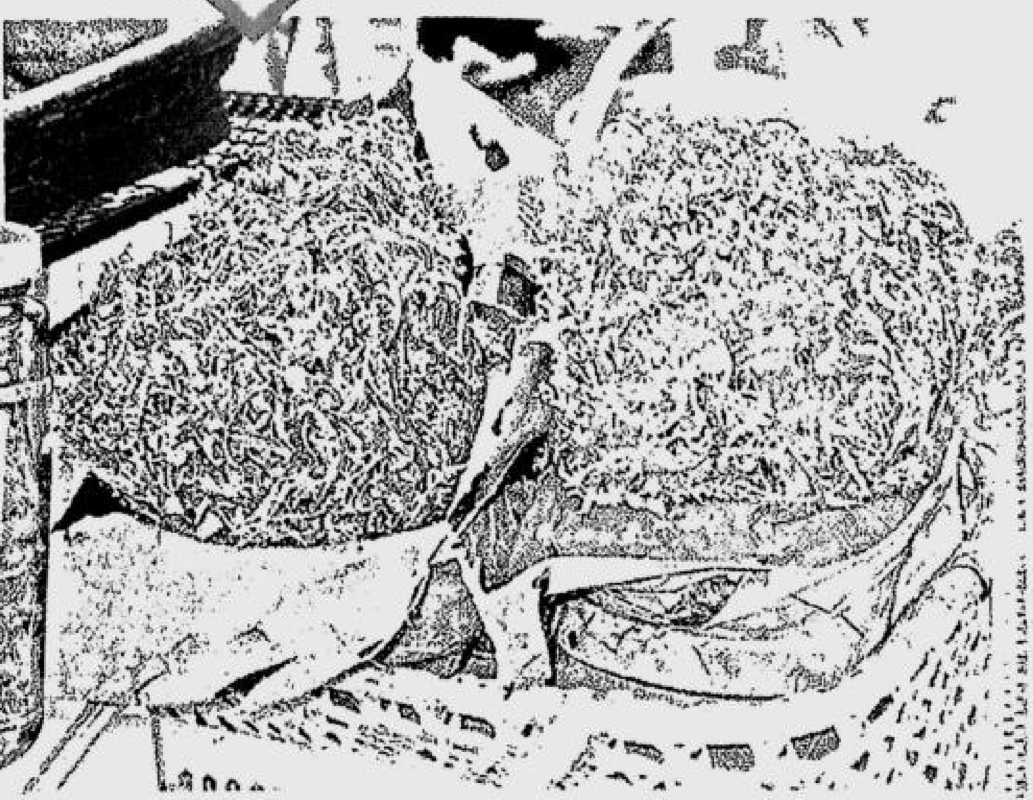
My cousin Nenggay from Zamboanga City used to add *pako* to her Gata de Cangrejo. Tess Chio, my cousin Nony's wife, always has *pako* on weekends when she is in their Morong residence. She gets the *pako* from the Balanga market where they drop by for fresh fish and shrimp and other provisions before proceeding to Morong.

In Davao City maybe two decades or so ago, I remember my fellow school paper adviser, Glo Mejia (of Arayat, Pampanga) prepared a salad of blanched *pako*, fresh tomatoes, sliced onions, boiled potatoes and sliced hard-cooked eggs for our group, which included six or seven high school students. It was not just a feast for the palate, but also for the eyes. Weren't these kids lucky to have two good cooks as teacher-chaperons, billeted in a private house, feasting on hot home-cooked meals (we did our own marketing and cooking), while other delegations were housed in schoolrooms turned dormitories and had their meals in huge, impersonal mess rooms?

More recently, on an invitation to Liliw, Laguna, where Baby

'PAKO'/ p.C6

BOTTLES of pickled *pako* from the Nenita Farm in Davao



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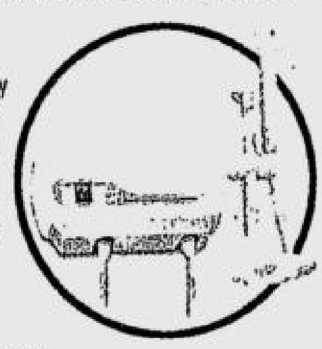

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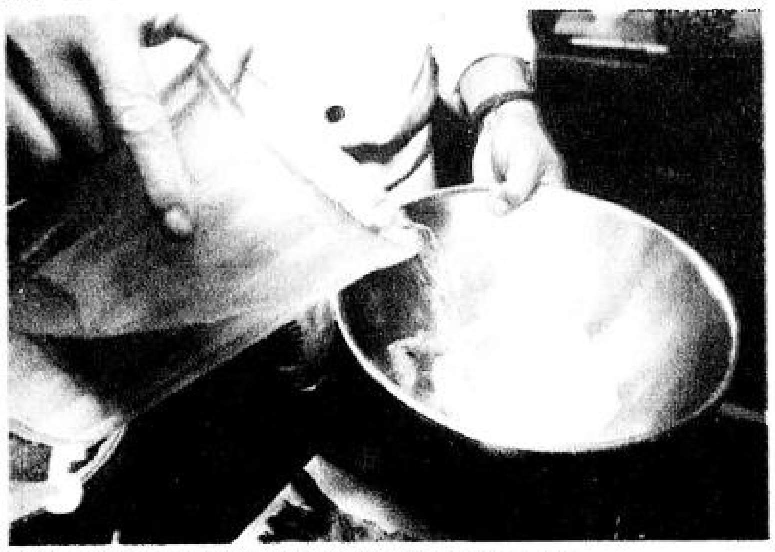
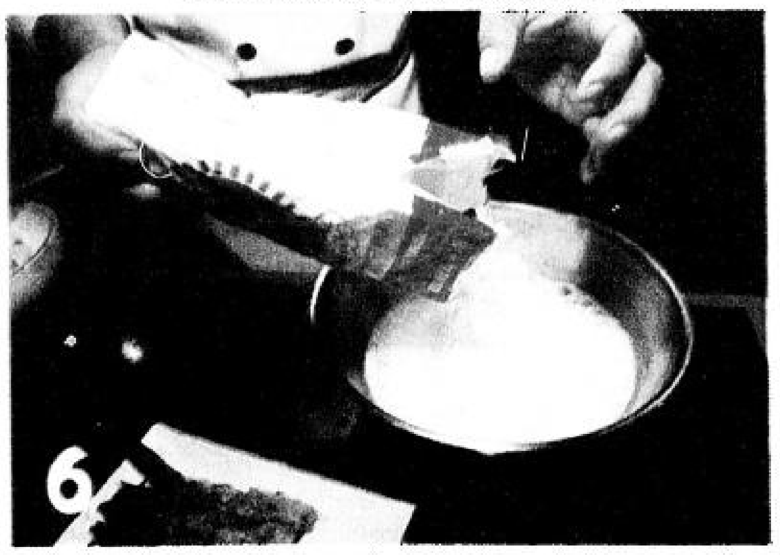
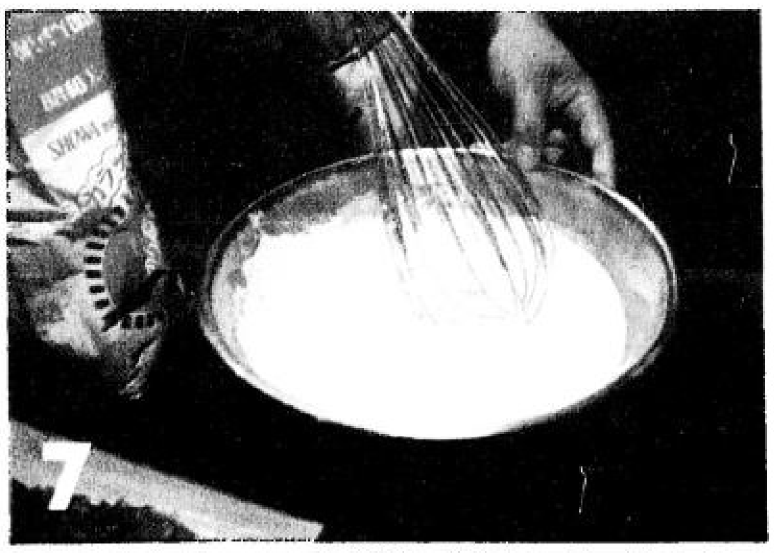


IN A BOWL, lightly beat egg yolk and add water.



ADD flour and ice to assure crispiness.



MIX until just combined, but do not over-mix. A few lumps are okay. To check the consistency, stick your chopsticks in and scoop up a bit of batter, which should drip off in a fairly steady, string-like stream.

Tempura for two

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Johnny Villena

TEMPURA is probably one of Japan's most famous dishes, next to sushi. However, if you seek its humble beginnings, you'd be surprised to know that tempura was not originally part of the Japanese diet.

It actually owes its origins to the visiting Portuguese missionaries of the 16th century. But, like many imported ideas, tempura slowly adapted itself to Japanese tastes and cooking. It adapted so well it soon became a popular fast food in Tokyo, sold from sidewalk stalls and roaming pushcarts.

STEP BY STEP

Tempura menus consist of seafood, such as shrimp (*ebi*), crab (*kani*) and slices of fish. A wonderful appetizer, tempura is easy enough to make at home. You can find all the ingredients in most supermarkets, except for the *mirin* (Japanese wine) and tempura flour that you can buy only at Japanese grocery stores.

Seafood and vegetables are the raw materials of tempura. And it's always best to use the freshest ingredients.

The vegetables and seafood are cut, washed, dried and dipped in the batter to give them a thin, almost transparent coating. Then they are dropped one at a time into the oil, which must be constantly kept at exactly the right temperature.

Vegetables that can be used include eggplant, green pepper, sweet potato, zucchini, squash, shiitake mushroom, onion, carrot.

Timing is essential

The traditional way to cook tempura is in a large wok. The food is cooked quickly, lifted from the oil and placed on the wire shelf to drain while the next batch is cooked. It is best eaten crisp with only the slightest hint of oil, and served with a savory dipping sauce that includes grated *daikon* (radish) and *dashi* (ginger).

Eduardo Idorot, sushi chef of Sulô Hotel, says the most important element in making tempura is the batter, made from eggs, flour and ice water.

"The batter is very different from the traditional batter in Western cooking," he says. "It contains no oil or butter and the ingredients are not combined until just before cooking. Then they are mixed very lightly, in small batches, and used immediately."

Timing is essential in preparing the batter and frying.

"Mix the batter as you begin to heat the deep-frying oil. The batter should be ready just when the oil has reached the ideal temperature for the ingredients you are going to deep-fry. It should be kept as cold as possible. This will give you a light, crispy, non-greasy finish," says Idorot, who has been with the hotel for five years. He's in charge of Sulô's Teppanyaki Restaurant and Sushi Bar.

Idorot says that while cooking the batter-coated shrimps, you will probably find that there are a lot of bits of batter floating loose in the oil. "Scoop these out as soon as possible, since they will burn if left in and impart a burnt flavor to the oil."

To make the tempura sauce, stir together the water, soy sauce and *mirin* in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil and stir in grated radish and ginger. You can prepare the tempura sauce in advance, or you may choose to get ready-made tempura sauce from any Japanese grocery store.

It is best to dip the tempura quickly into the sauce and avoid lengthy soaking. Tempura should be eaten immediately as it quickly loses crispness if left to sit. This recipe serves two persons.

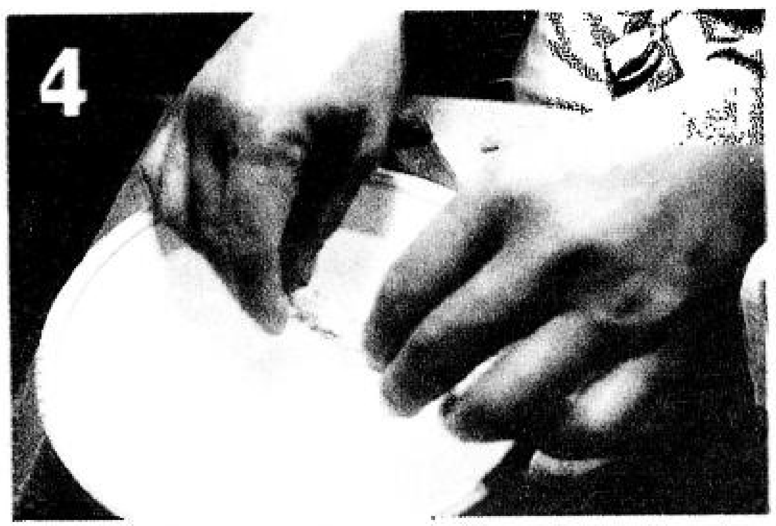
> The secret is in the batter. Mix the batter as soon as you begin heating the oil for deep-frying

Ingredients
10 pc shrimps (ebi)

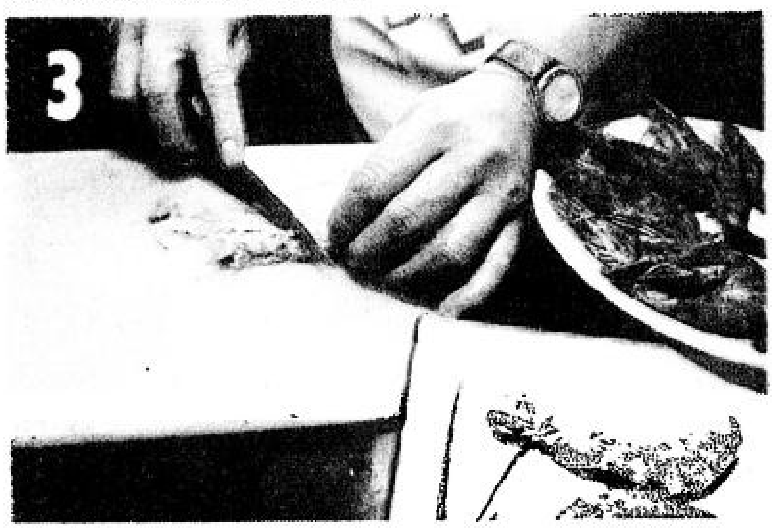
Batter:
350 g tempura flour (Shiowa brand), sifted
¾ c water
1 pc eggyolk
200 g ice
Corn oil for deep-drying

Tempura sauce:
2 tbsp Kikkoman soy sauce
8 tbsp water
2 tbsp sugar
2 tbsp *mirin* (Japanese wine)
10 g radish, shredded
10 g ginger, grated

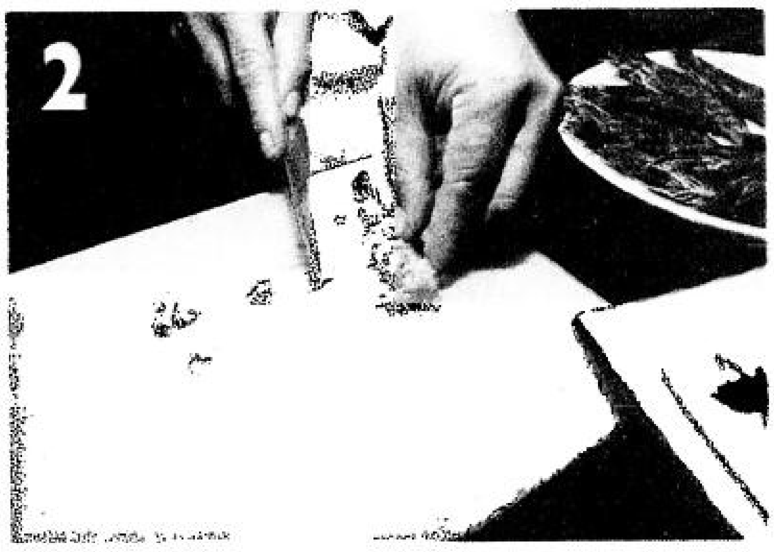
E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer. com.ph



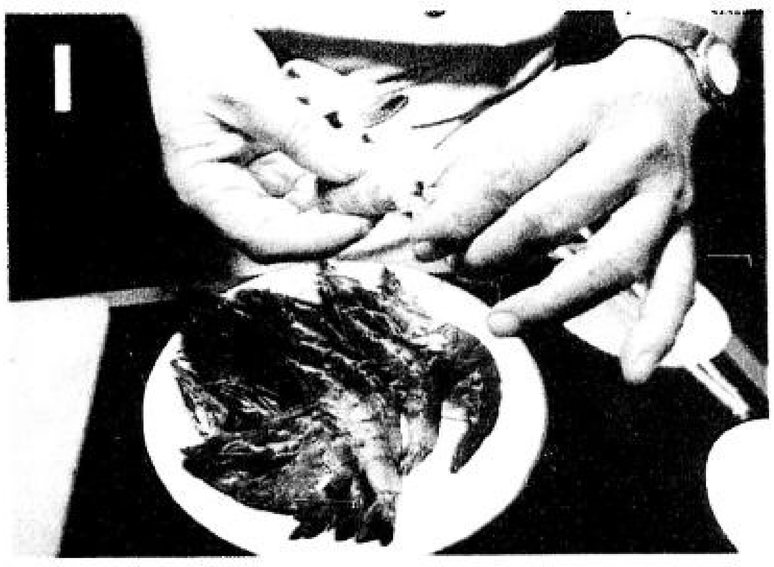
STRAIGHTEN the shrimp for better frying and clean shrimp in a bowl of clean water. Set aside.



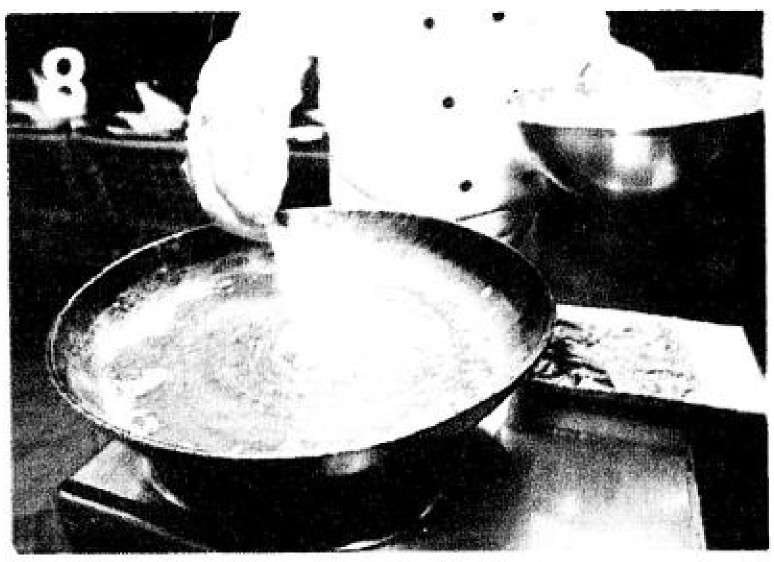
CUT several shallow crosswise incisions along the stomach side to prevent the shrimp from curling up when deep-fried.



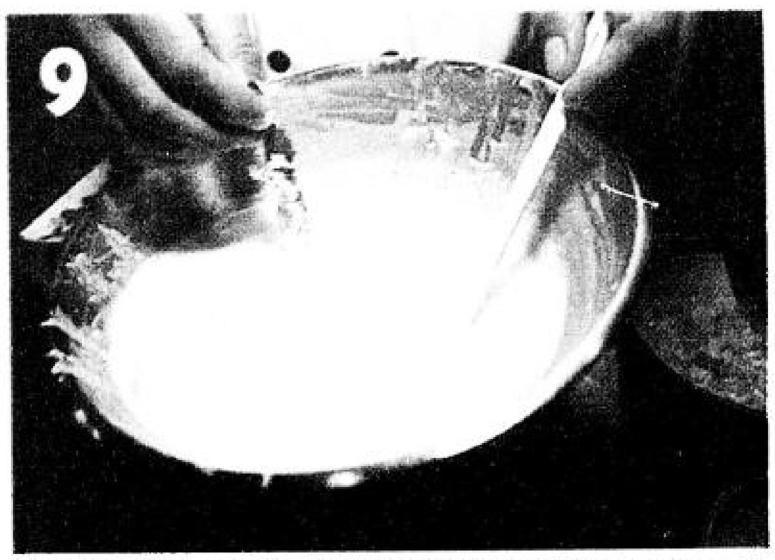
REMOVE body shell and devein the shrimp. (To remove body shell: Insert fingers under the legs and pull upward over the back to remove shell and leave tail intact.). Cut off the tips of the tail.



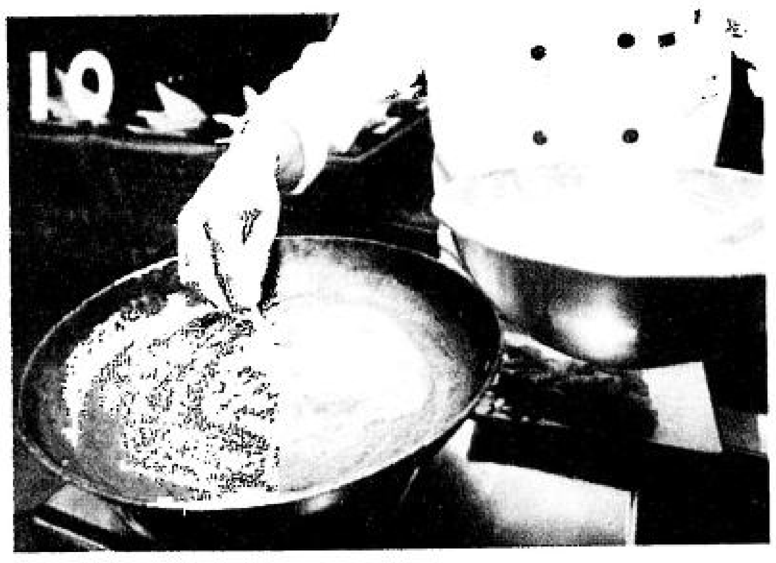
REMOVE the shrimp's head.



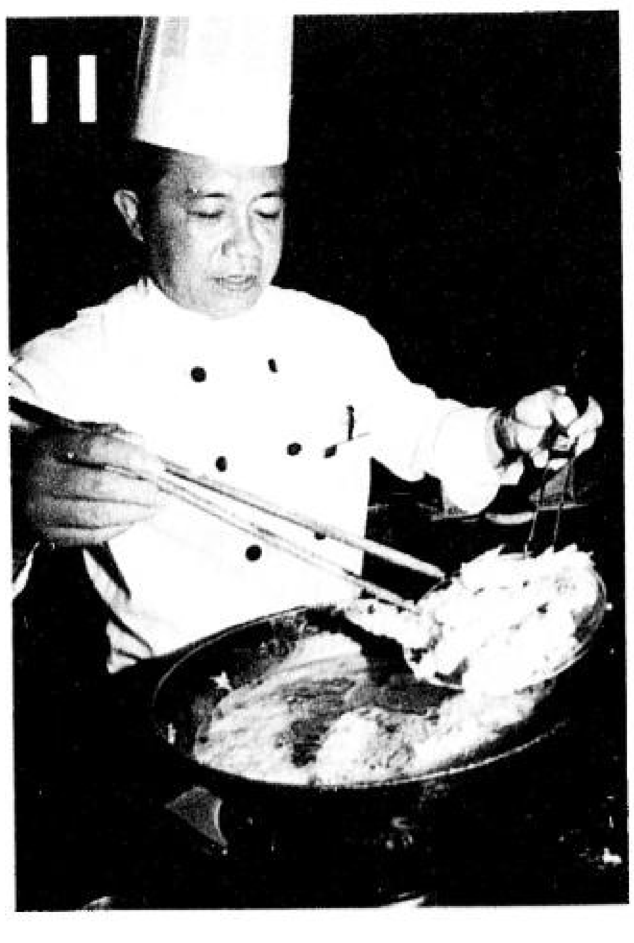
BEGIN heating up the oil at medium heat until heat reaches 350°F. To find out, drop a bit of batter into the oil. If it immediately floats to the top, the oil is ready.



DIP shrimps one at a time into the batter, pausing for a bit over the bowl to let any excess drip off. Remember to hold shrimp by the tail when dipping.



BEFORE frying, dust shrimp with flour. Slip the piece gently into the hot oil close to the side of the pan. Deep-fry shrimps until they are puffed and golden. Turn over as each piece floats to the top.



DO not put too many pieces into the pan at one time. Keep it only half-full. Then, using a strainer, remove shrimps from the pan.

SERVE *ebi* tempura at once with tempura sauce.

Complaints about scratch-number games and Sex Bomb in schools

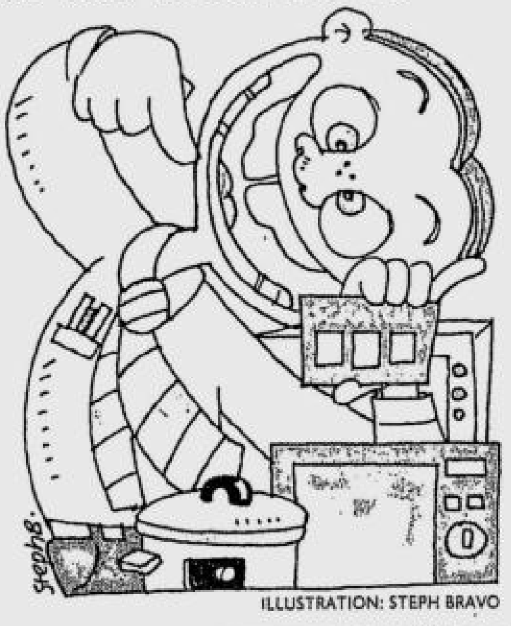


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

IT'S about time supermarkets and malls warn their customers about pushy salesmen that dupe customers into joining their scratch-a-number game with supposedly fabulous prizes at stake. In reality, the contest is a mere ploy to trap people into buying their products, often at exorbitant prices. Deception, overpricing and sub-standard products are some of the complaints we have received from victims of these scratch-a-number games, or more popularly called *kiskis-panalo*.

Here's one more story to warn shoppers not to pay attention to this sales gimmick. Last Saturday, a *balikbayan* and her maid went to Shopwise. Along the way, salesmen approached them and asked them to join their scratch-a-number contest. They were told that the prizes included a microwave oven and a 21-inch television set that was cable-ready.

"I don't know why I was sales-talked into letting my maid join the contest," the *balikbayan* related her experience to us. "I just realized that we were being congratulated profusely for winning the television set and microwave. To get the prizes, however, the salesmen said I had to buy a massage kit worth P26,000. To make the story short, I bought the kit, paid P24,000 with my credit card and added P2,000 in check.

"I realized we were duped when I opened the television at home and found out that only one channel was working, and it had a very bad reception. Moreover, it was not cable-ready. I immediately called up my daughter in the US to call up my bank and block my credit card account. She called back to tell me the bad news. The transaction had already been completed because I had authorized it."

We consulted the Department of Trade and Industry and was advised that the *balikbayan* should file a formal complaint with the consumer welfare division at 12/F, Trafalgar Plaza Building, HV dela Costa Street, Salcedo Village, Makati. (For more information, consumers with the same problem can call 811-8231 to 33).

Overdue action

M. Fuentes of Alabang Hills Village is not happy about the way her complaint is being handled by the manufacturer that sold her a defective massage chair. She sought the help of the office of DTI Undersecretary Adrian Cristobal and was advised to write a formal letter of complaint to DTI-NCR director Luwina Enecio.

Fuentes complained: "My husband and I bought a massage chair from Sunway company and paid P98,900 for it. A few days later, the machine stopped working properly. I called the manager and demanded full refund of my money, but the manager prevailed on us to accept another machine. We relented, but after a few weeks, the same problem occurred. They repaired the machine, but the problems kept recurring. On top of that, we always had to deliver the 300-lbs machine to their company because they had no available truck."

Fuentes cried, "Enough is enough. I want my money back. I don't want the machine repaired the umpteenth time. I will settle for a lesser amount, but I no longer want the chair!"

Sex-Bomb education

We support members of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites in their protest against obscene dancing on television. Impressionable children glorify the dances and are proud to be able to imitate the Sex Bomb Dancers.

Here's another comment about Sex-Bomb dancing from journalist Edita Burgos: "I accompanied grade school students of St. Paul-San Miguel to their outreach project in the midst of a depressed area in Bulacan. To entertain us, the schoolchildren in this agricultural town prepared a dance number. I couldn't believe my eyes when, kids from Grades 1-6 and as young as four years old, presented their imitation of Sex-Bomb dancing. What's more, their costumes were bare and sequined as their idolized dancers."

Burgos observed that the more the kids gyrated and belly-danced, the more they showed that they were very proud and happy. To make it worse, the teachers gloated and the parents were evidently as proud as their children. "They don't seem to know that if these kids performed Sex-Bomb dancing to more formal audiences, it would be very embarrassing both to them and to the audience."

"I am pleased that St. Paul College, where my grandson Miguel Burgos Gonzales goes to school, bans Sex-Bomb dancing," Burgos wrote.

No to malpractice bill

Here is a summary of comments from physicians on the medical malpractice bill:

"Malpractice insurance will be in business. To protect doctors from cases filed in court, they will buy malpractice insurance, and the premium won't be cheap. This will be added to the professional fees which patients will have to shoulder."

"Patients at risk of death or complications will find it difficult to find doctors."

"Medical bills will be very costly."

"It would only affect health care adversely."

"It would only encourage business scams, for example, medical malpractice insurance, legal services, etc."

E-mail the author at mgiron@I-manila.com.ph

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Rosa Rosal

PHILAM DIRECT

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Cash Assurance & Recovery for Elders

GUARANTEED ACCEPTANCE
basta 50-75 years old ka

May cash benefits ka of up to
P4,000,000
for as low as
P399/month!

- No medical exams!
- No health questions!
- Cash paid directly and quickly to you
- As low as P399/month
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- 24-Hour Worldwide Coverage
- Coverage up to 85 years old
- Consultations with any physician
- Double cash payment in case of death caused by an earthquake

Type	*Benefits*
Broken Bones, Burns, Internal Injuries	P 250,000
Accidental Death	P 2,000,000
Weekly Hospital Cash for Accidents	P 25,000
Permanent Total Disability	P 2,000,000
Double Cash Payment	P 2,000,000

Other plans are also available.

20% discount for your spouse if both of you enroll.

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PHILAM INSURANCE
AIG A Member of American International Group, Inc.

30-DAY Money back Guarantee
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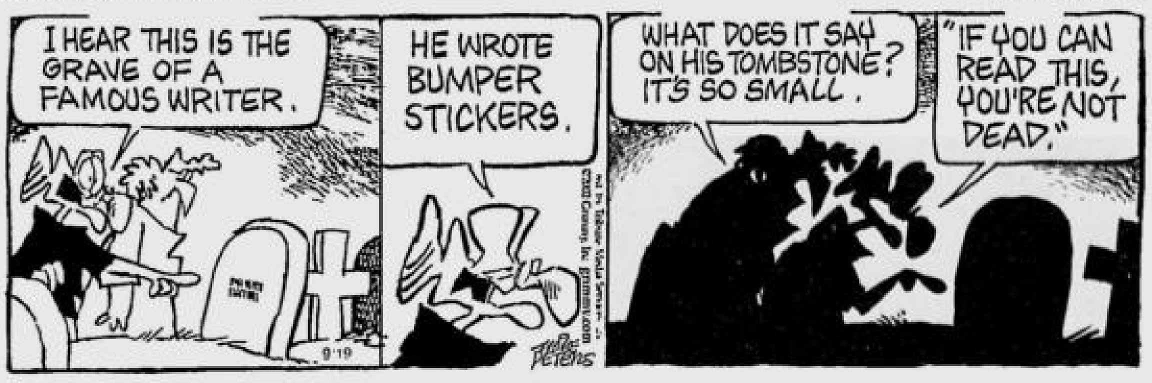
Our fully-trained Customer Representatives are ready to assist you.

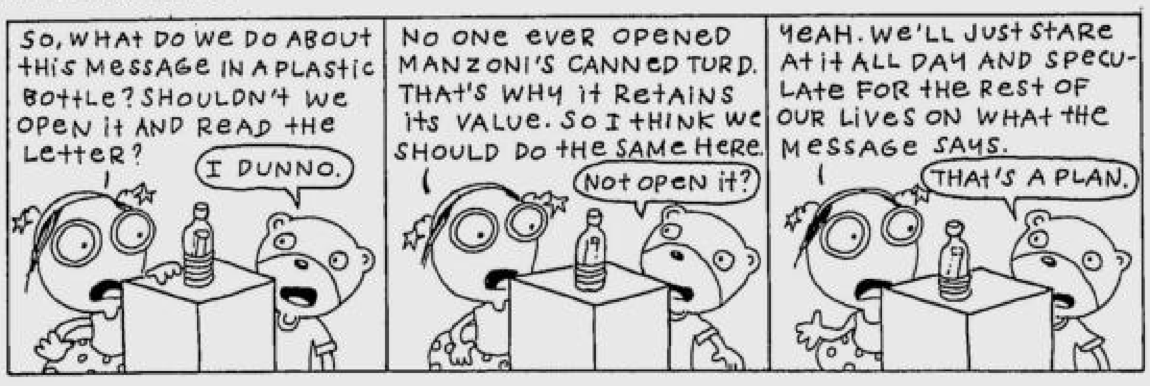
FREE CALL! 1-800-1000-50-2-75
Want care? Tawag na!

If you are a non-PLDT subscriber, a cell phone subscriber, or if you have any difficulty in contacting us on our 1-800 number, please call (02) 421-4150.

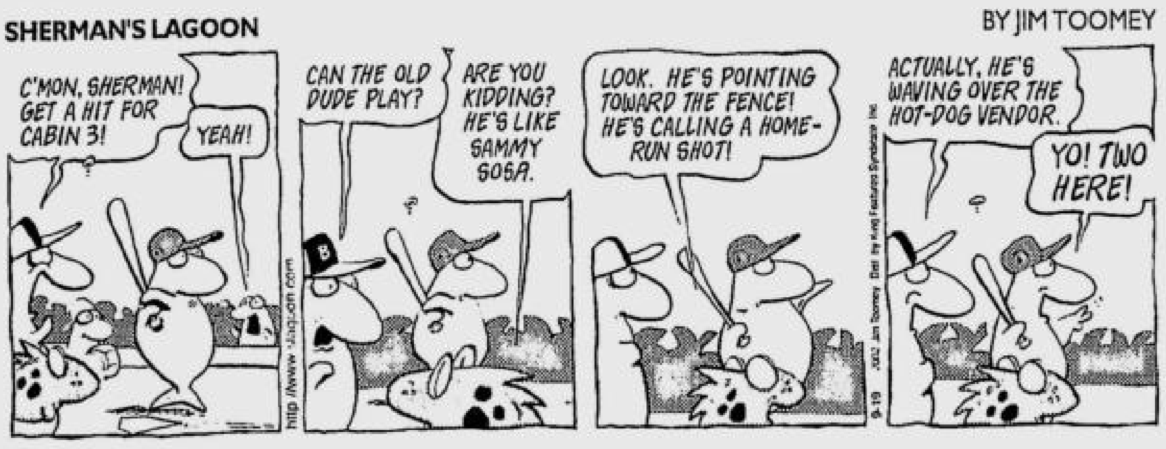
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS


I HEAR THIS IS THE GRAVE OF A FAMOUS WRITER.
HE WROTE BUMPER STICKERS.
WHAT DOES IT SAY ON HIS TOMBSTONE? IT'S SO SMALL.
"IF YOU CAN READ THIS, YOU'RE NOT DEAD."
9-19
MIKE PETERS

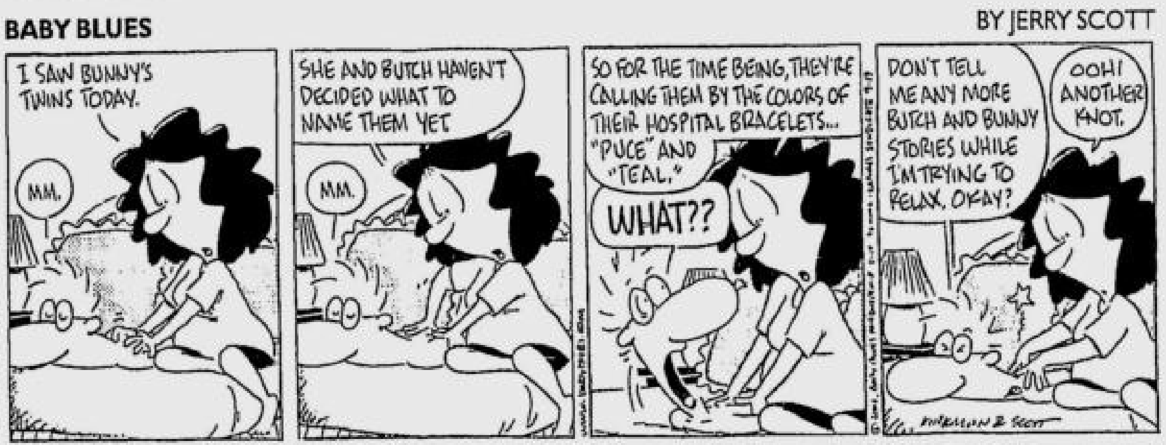
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


So, WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT THIS MESSAGE IN A PLASTIC BOTTLE? SHOULDN'T WE OPEN IT AND READ THE LETTER?
I DUNNO.
No ONE EVER OPENED MANZONI'S CANNED TURD. THAT'S WHY IT RETAINS ITS VALUE. SO I THINK WE SHOULD DO THE SAME HERE.
Not open it?
YEAH. WE'LL JUST STARE AT IT ALL DAY AND SPECULATE FOR THE REST OF OUR LIVES ON WHAT THE MESSAGE SAYS.
THAT'S A PLAN.

SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY


C'MON, SHERMAN! GET A HIT FOR CABIN 3!
YEAH!
CAN THE OLD DUDE PLAY?
ARE YOU KIDDING? HE'S LIKE SAMMY SOSA.
LOOK. HE'S POINTING TOWARD THE FENCE! HE'S CALLING A HOME-RUN SHOT!
ACTUALLY, HE'S WAVING OVER THE HOT-DOG VENDOR.
YO! TWO HERE!
9-19

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


I SAW BUNNY'S TWINS TODAY.
MM.
SHE AND BUTCH HAVEN'T DECIDED WHAT TO NAME THEM YET
MM.
SO FOR THE TIME BEING, THEY'RE CALLING THEM BY THE COLORS OF THEIR HOSPITAL BRACELETS... "PUCE" AND "TEAL."
WHAT??
DON'T TELL ME ANY MORE BUTCH AND BUNNY STORIES WHILE I'M TRYING TO RELAX, OKAY?
OOH! ANOTHER KNOT.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Trisha Yearwood, Joan Lunden, Jeremy Irons, Paul Williams

Happy Birthday: This is a good year to deal with personal issues quickly. Control your tendency to blow situations out of proportion by getting involved in creative projects. This can be a prosperous year for you if you are conscientious, observant and take advantage of the offers being made. Your numbers are 11, 15, 21, 29, 33, 40

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't push your luck when it comes to dealing with authority figures. You have to play by the book if you want to win. Be fair in your dealings and you'll have no regrets.

Do your best to help others today. Don't let changes going on around you cause worry or upset. Your consistent nature will help you maintain your position.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Your charm and sheer knowledge will turn heads. You will be able to get your point across and get others to realize the potential. Believe in yourself.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Focus on your home, family and investments today. You will accomplish little if you are too busy complaining or nagging. Help those around you feel confident that you know what you are doing.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): It may be time to do a little backtracking, especially if you have been taking someone for granted. If you try to talk your way out of a situation, you are likely to find yourself digging a deeper hole. Take heed of a friend's advice.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Job opportunities are apparent, and if you act fast you will end up in the exact position you've been dreaming about. Don't let a personal responsibility hold you back. You can handle more than you realize.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Shopping for special items will turn into an adventure filled with all sorts of interesting surprises. You are likely to run into someone you haven't seen for a long time. This is a feel-good day, so take advantage of it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Added responsibilities are likely to develop. Try to satisfy everyone but not at the expense of ruining your health or personal relationship.Time to think about yourself and act accordingly.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't wait for everyone to come to you. New romantic opportunities will surface through social gatherings with friends. If you are already in a relationship, take it to the next level.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Your ambitious mood will lead to moneymaking deals. Do your own research and don't leave anything to chance. Someone may give you false information.

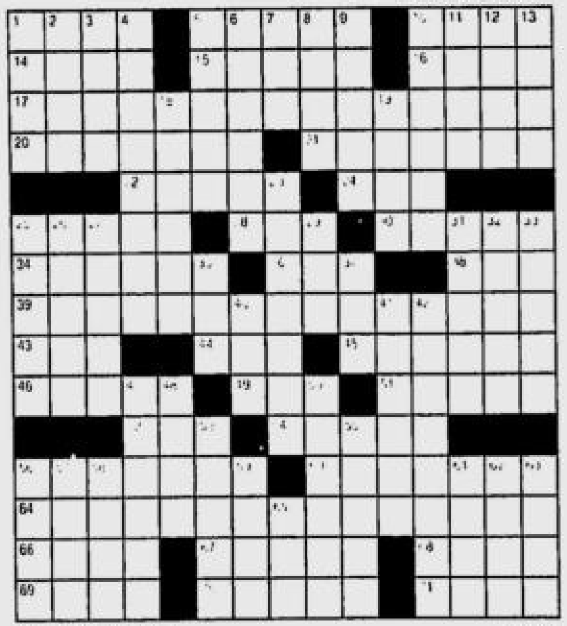
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You may feel a little uncertain about your future. Take advantage of any opportunity offered and believe in your heart that you can do whatever is required.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Problems at home can be expected, especially if you are dealing with an older relative. Financial investments appear to be lucrative. You can sign contracts and make agreements that will be solid and lasting.

Birthday Baby: You will have a humanitarian outlook, determined to take care of those who are helpless.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By James E. Buell
Edgewater, FL

9/19/02

ACROSS
1 Type of pear
5 Pie nut
10 Money factory
14 Do-others separator
15 Traditional saying
16 Garfield's pal
17 Woody Allen film
20 Derring-do
21 Cast-iron pan
22 Not by any means
24 Mineral springs
25 Glossy fabric
28 Bird's bill
30 Ostentatious
34 Tickled
36 Skedaddle
38 Sib for sis
39 Womanizer's organizer
43 Self-esteem
44 Short sleep
45 Strike out
46 Poetic dawns
49 Brynner of "The King and I"
51 Stand in a studio
52 Switch positions
54 Packs down
56 Superabundant
60 Humdrum
64 Subject of a rainy-day rhyme
66 Military installation
67 Gull-like sea birds
68 In the vicinity
69 Thin strip
70 Adhesive substance
71 Openings

DOWN
1 Clinton follower
2 Where the drinks are?
3 Luminary
4 Settler
5 Temporary repair
6 Phonograph inventor
7 Engine part
8 A month of Sundays
9 Narrow strips of land
10 Smackers
11 Sacred image
12 Adidas rival
13 Dry run
18 Train-set brand name
19 Tears
23 Nicely said
25 Oregon's capital
26 Pedro's pal
27 Private instructor
29 Sheep sound
31 Hautboys
32 Penned
33 Rube
35 Lion's lair
37 1400 in letters
40 Sound from a hound
41 Maintain in good condition
42 Using explosives
47 So far, no
48 Stuffed shirt
50 Voice box
53 Retinue
55 Old-fashioned
56 Barbecue choice
57 Emphatic typeface: abbr.
58 Mountain in Thessaly
59 Flight member
61 Inkling
62 Tidal situation
63 Makes a mistake
65 Packed-house letters

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

E	P	I	C	■	B	A	T	O	R	■	P	A	S	T
P	E	R	U	■	E	F	A	T	E	■	A	L	E	E
P	L	O	T	■	H	I	T	T	H	E	R	O	A	D
S	E	N	A	T	O	R	S	■	I	N	S	E	T	S
■	■	■	N	I	L	E	■	U	R	G	E	■	■	■
W	E	L	D	E	D	■	K	N	E	E	■	M	A	P
R	U	E	R	■	E	L	O	I	■	L	L	A	M	A
A	L	O	U	■	N	E	A	T	H	■	E	R	O	S
P	E	N	N	E	■	E	L	S	E	■	A	I	N	T
S	R	A	■	D	U	R	A	■	R	A	V	A	G	E
■	■	■	L	I	N	E	■	C	E	D	E	■	■	■
A	G	L	E	T	S	■	T	R	U	S	T	E	E	S
F	L	Y	T	H	E	C	O	O	P	■	O	D	I	E
R	A	R	E	■	R	O	N	C	O	■	W	I	N	E
O	D	E	S	■	S	T	E	E	N	■	N	E	E	D

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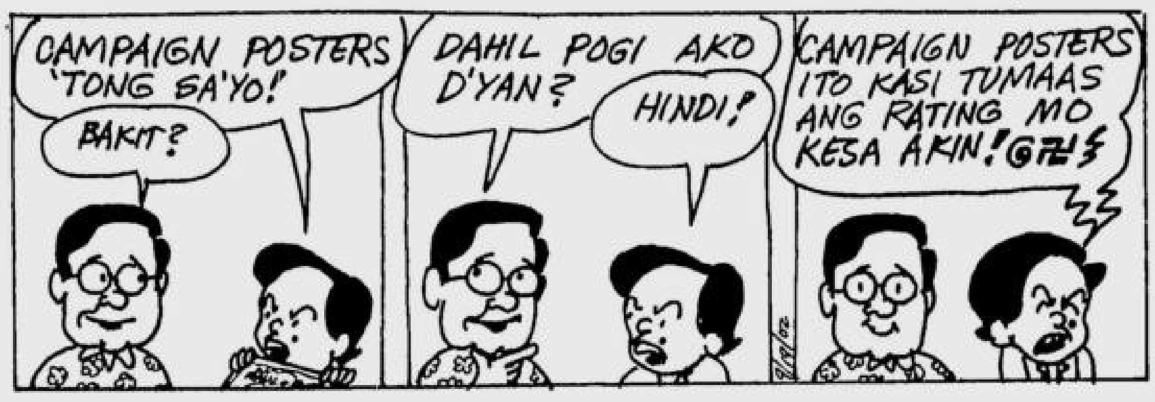
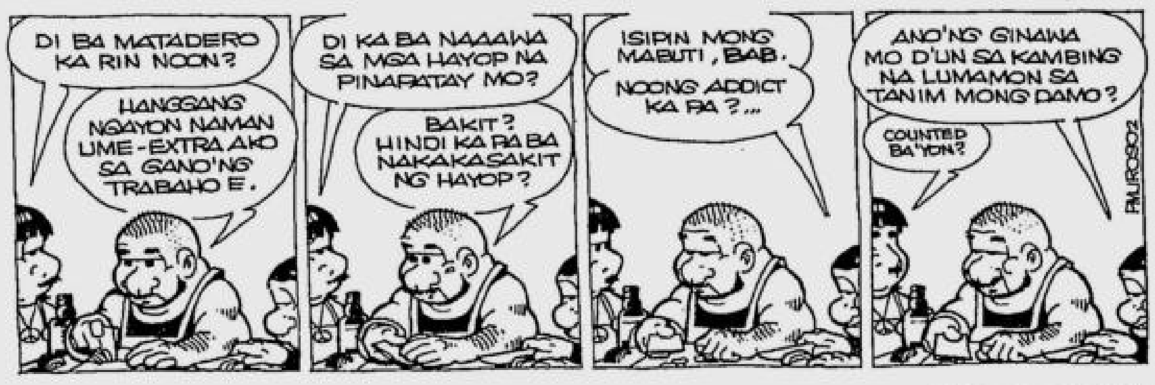
9/18/02

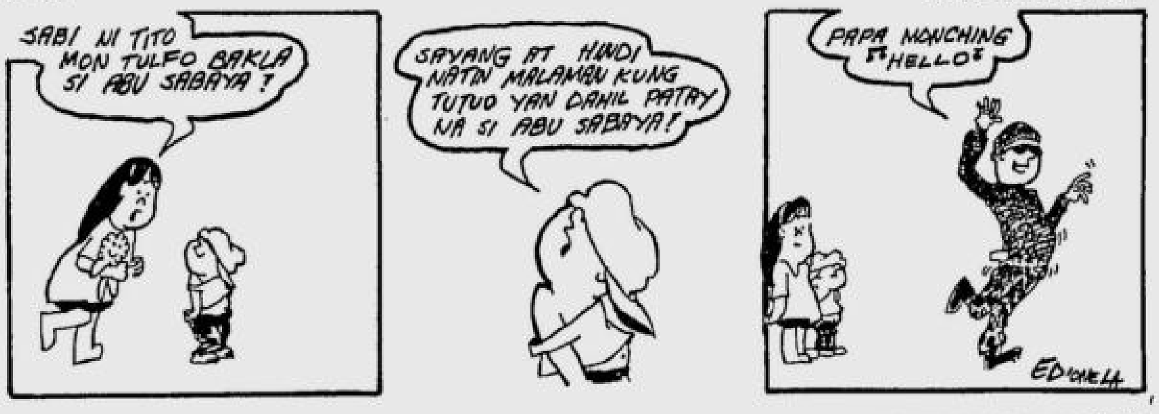
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


CAMPAIGN POSTERS 'TONG SA'YO!
BAKIT?
DAHIL POGI AKO D'YAN?
HINDI!
CAMPAIGN POSTERS ITO KASI TUMAAS ANG RATING MO KESA AKIN!

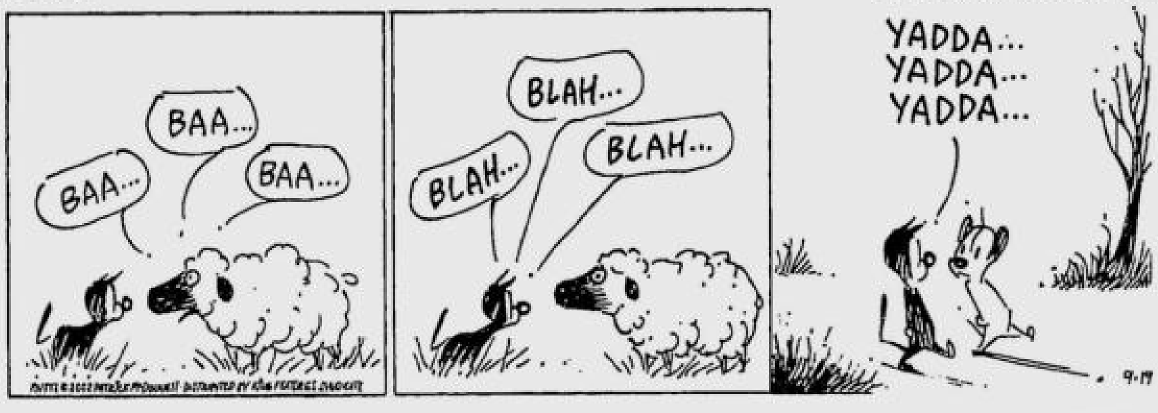
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


DI BA MATADERO KA RIN NOON?
HANGGANG NGAYON NAMAN UME-EXTRA AKO SA GANO'NG TRABAHO E.
DI KA BA NAAAWA SA MGA HAYOP NA PINAPATAY MO?
BAKIT? HINDI KA BA BA NAKAKASAKIT NG HAYOP?
ISIPIN MONG MABUTI, BAB.
NOONG ADDICT KA PA?...
ANO'NG GINAWA MO D'UN SA KAMBING NA LUMAMON SA TANIM MONG DAMO?
COUNTED BA'YON?
PMJR0902

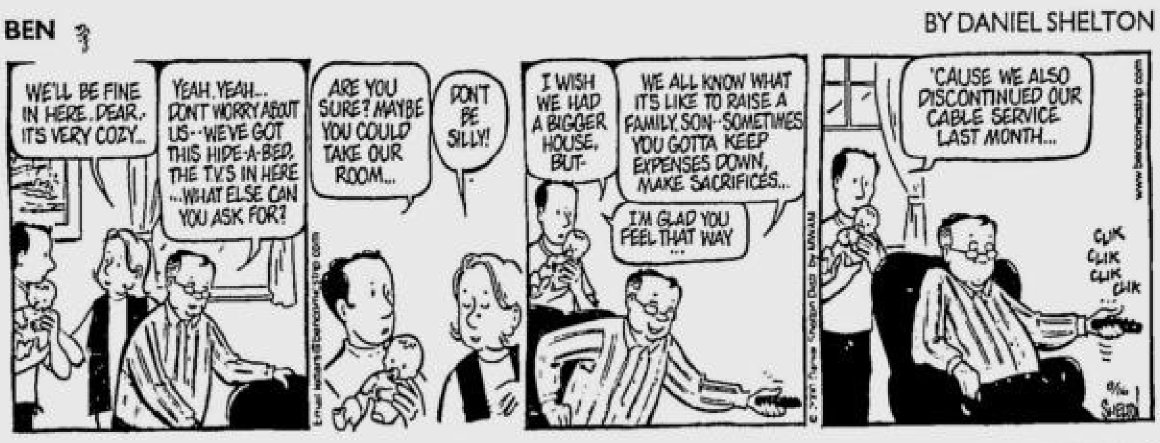
SIMO BY EDGAR DIONELA


SABI NI TITO MON TULFO BAKLA SI ABU SABAYA?
SAYANG AT HINDI NATIN MALAMAN KUNG TUTUO YAN DAHIL PATAY NA SI ABU SABAYA!
PAPA MONCHING "HELLO"

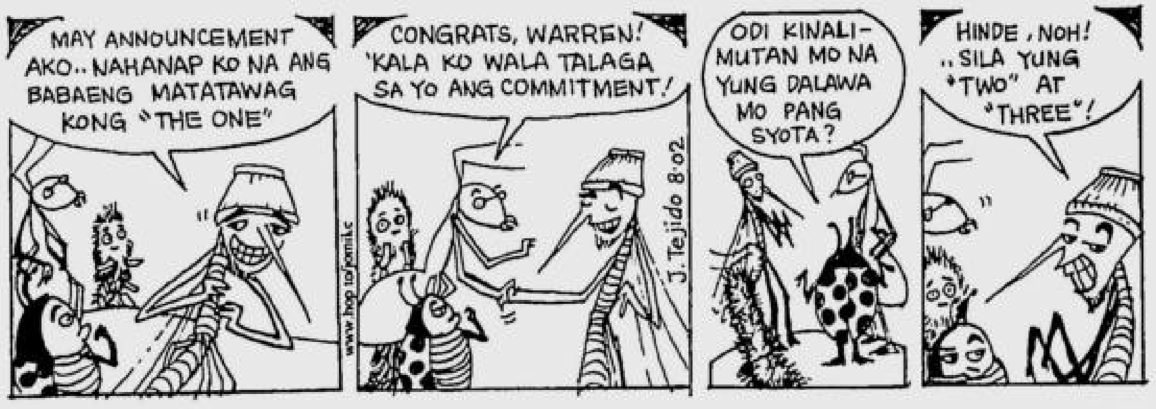
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


BAA...
BAA...
BAA...
BLAH...
BLAH...
BLAH...
YADDA... YADDA... YADDA...
9-19

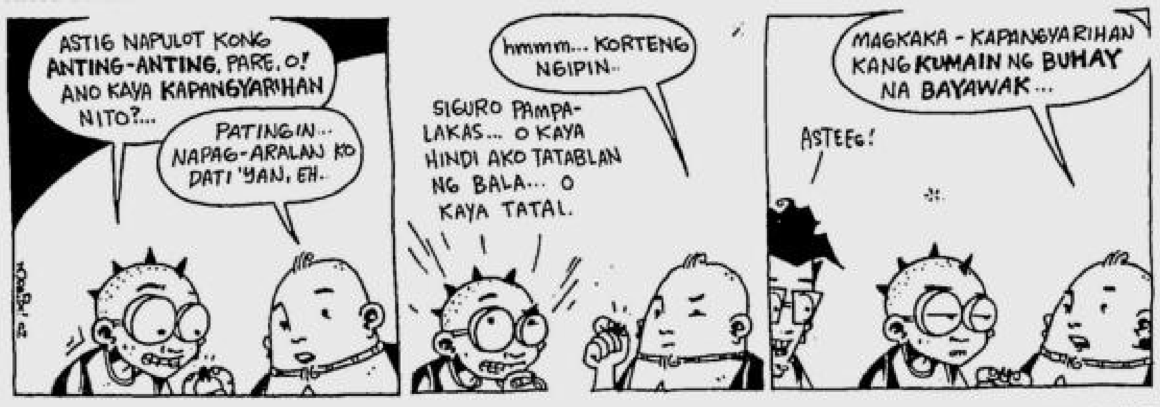
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


WE'LL BE FINE IN HERE.. DEAR. IT'S VERY COZY...
YEAH. YEAH... DON'T WORRY ABOUT US-- WE'VE GOT THIS HIDE-A-BED, THE TV'S IN HERE ...WHAT ELSE CAN YOU ASK FOR?
ARE YOU SURE? MAYBE YOU COULD TAKE OUR ROOM...
DON'T BE SILLY!
I WISH WE HAD A BIGGER HOUSE, BUT-
WE ALL KNOW WHAT ITS LIKE TO RAISE A FAMILY, SON-- SOMETIMES YOU GOTTA KEEP EXPENSES DOWN, MAKE SACRIFICES...
I'M GLAD YOU FEEL THAT WAY
'CAUSE WE ALSO DISCONTINUED OUR CABLE SERVICE LAST MONTH...
CLIK CLIK CLIK CLIK
www.bencomicstrip.com

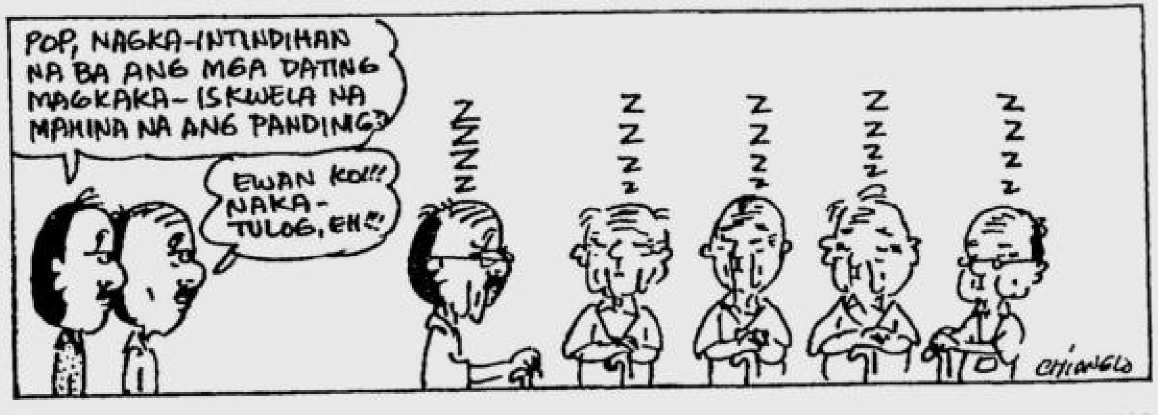
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MAY ANNOUNCEMENT AKO.. NAHANAP KO NA ANG BABAENG MATATAWAG KONG "THE ONE"
CONGRATS, WARREN! 'KALA KO WALA TALAGA SA YO ANG COMMITMENT!
J. Tejido 8·02
ODI KINALIMUTAN MO NA YUNG DALAWA MO PANG SYOTA?
HINDE, NOH! .. SILA YUNG "TWO" AT "THREE"!

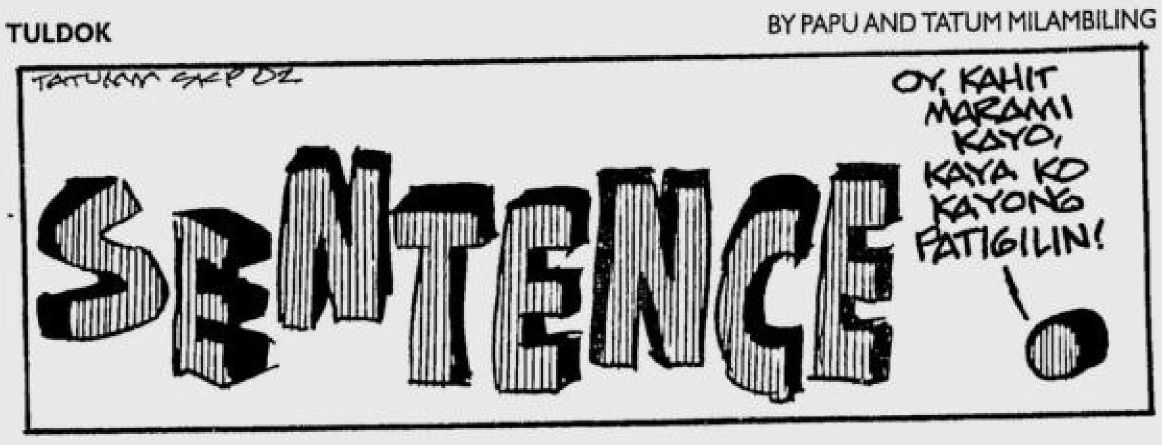
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


ASTIG NAPULOT KONG ANTING-ANTING, PARE, O! ANO KAYA KAPANGYARIHAN NITO?...
PATINGIN... NAPAG-ARALAN KO DATI 'YAN, EH..
hmmm... KORTENG NGIPIN..
SIGURO PAMPALAKAS... O KAYA HINDI AKO TATABLAN NG BALA... O KAYA TATAL.
MAGKAKA-KAPANGYARIHAN KANG KUMAIN NG BUHAY NA BAYAWAK...
ASTEEG!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


POP, NAGKA-INTINDIHAN NA BA ANG MGA DATING MAGKAKA-ISKWELA NA MAHINA NA ANG PANDINIG?
EWAN KO!!! NAKATULOG, EH!!
ZZZZZ
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


TATUM SEP 02
SENTENCE
OY, KAHIT MARAMI KAYO, KAYA KO KAYONG PATIGILIN!

Sumptuous Japanese lunch set

DINING OUT

KIMPURA JAPANESE RESTAURANT recently launched its Lunch Set Express. Set 1 has *ebiko* roll, tempura, chicken teriyaki, *miso* soup, steamed rice and just dessert for P235+. Set 2 has *agedashi dofu*, sashimi, tempura, beef yakiniku, *miso* soup, steamed rice and dessert. Set 3 has *nasu abura itame* (grilled eggplant), *ebiko* roll, *torikatsu*, beef teriyaki, *miso* soup, steamed rice and dessert. Set 4 includes kani sashimi, *tonkatsu*, blue marlin teriyaki, *miso* soup, steamed rice and dessert. Kimpura has outlets at Greenhills Shopping Center (beside Uni-Mart, with tel. 721-8816, 721-8851) and Glorietta 2, 2/L Ayala Center, Makati (tel. 893-2307, 892-8274).

LUK YUEN NOODLE HOUSE offers new rice toppings in a bowl such as tausi spareribs, spareribs with chicken feet, chicken with black mushrooms and pork chop with vegetable curry, from P75 to P95 per bowl. Get a kick with Luk Yuen's new dim sum entrées—seafood roll wrapped in Japanese seaweed, steamed squid in garlic sauce, Chiuchow and vegetarian dumplings, fruit roll tropicale and deep fried minced shrimps in sugarcane sticks. Luk Yuen Noodle House has six outlets in Metro Manila—Greenbelt 1 and Glorietta 2 (Ayala Center, Makati), SM Megamall B Basement, Greenhills Shopping Center, Cash & Carry (near Buendia) and Makati Supermart in Alabang Town Center.

JADE GARDEN offers Choices 2 promo until Oct. 5. For lunch, a minimum of three diners per table are entitled to choose two free dimsum orders (choices of pork siomai, shrimp or shark's fin dumplings, spring rolls, squid in garlic sauce or sweet sesame balls). Dinner treat consists of two choices of main dishes for free (choices of sweet and sour pork, chicken in pepper sauce Chiuchow style, Sichuan shrimps, season vegetables with crabmeat, sliced beef with cucumber or *lohon* vegetables with bean curd) per table, with a minimum of three diners. Choices 2 promo is limited to à la carte orders only and is available daily. Jade Garden is located at Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center (with tel. 892-2319, 812-4548).

T.G.I. FRIDAY'S offers new meal combinations for children. The Kid's Combo 1 comprises three strips of the restaurant's popular chicken fingers and spaghetti served with Friday's fries. Kid's Combo 2 has Kid's Burger served with spaghetti and a side of Friday's fries. T.G.I. Friday's new kiddie meals are available at its branches in Glorietta, Robinsons Place Manila, Hotel Rembrandt in QC, Alabang Town Center and the Brickroad of Sta. Lucia East.

SBARRO now delivers your favorite pizza, pasta and other Italian treats at its selected outlets in SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City and Festival Mall, Alabang. Just call 633-1882 to 83 (SM Megamall) and 850-3611 (Festival Mall). Delivery is available from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. for a minimum purchase of P250. Visit other Sbarro branches located at SM City North Edsa, Glorietta 2 and Robinsons Place Ermita.

ZUCCHINI'S GRILL and Vinotek offers contemporary European, distinctly Italian and presented with Mediterranean elegance and sophistication. Every Tuesday and Saturday evening, customers are treated to live flute and guitar music. Zucchini's Grill and Vinotek, located at 66 Timog Avenue, QC, is open daily, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Call 925-0789/415-5533.

GOLDEN Pearl serves Chinese food at budget-friendly prices. Must-try dishes at Golden Pearl include crabstick mango, sweet and sour boneless fish fillet, Lapu-lapu topped with rich sauce, crab rice, salt pepper squids and beef ho fan, a traditional Chinese noodle dish that blends flat noodles with tender beef and Chinese bean sprouts.

NATIONAL SPORTS GRILL celebrates the start of the "ber" months with the Beer Bucket Blast. Enjoy four local beers in a bucket with a choice of a featured appetizer or one hour of billiards, all for an affordable price of P325. NSG is the perfect venue for private and corporate banquets at half the cost and double the fun. National Sports Grill is at 3/F Greenbelt 1, Makati City. Call 752-5431.

MANILA MIDTOWN HOTEL serves *bibingka* and *puto bumbong* starting this month until the last holiday night of December. Each serving of *bibingka*, a steamed rice with salted egg, margarine, cheese, and grated coconut and puto bumbong, a purple-hued rice cake smothered with melted butter, grated coconut and cheese, is prepared in customary charcoaled fire oven. Order in any of the hotel outlets: The Vogue Coffeeshop, Maxims Pastryshop or the Orchid Bar, 2-10 p.m. Call 526-7001.

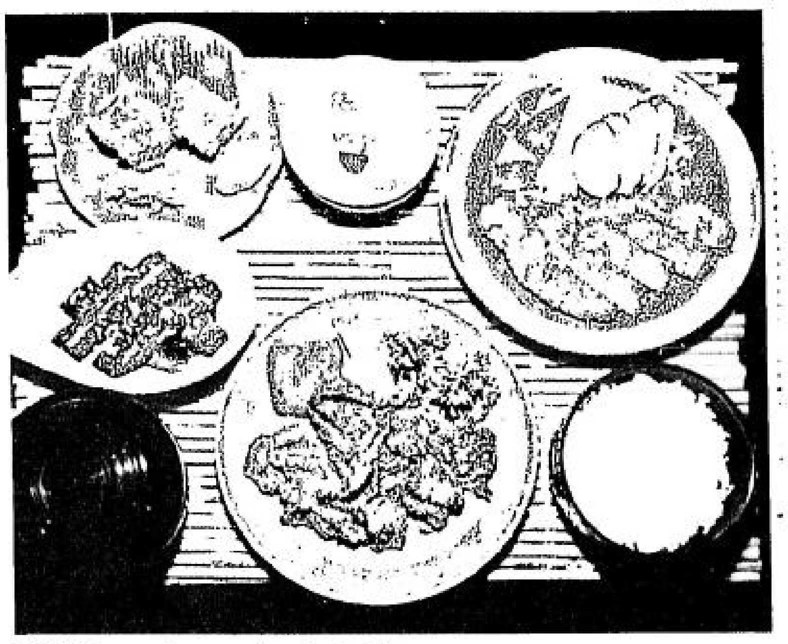
EDSA SHANGRI-LA'S Inaho Tei features Tako (octopus) Festival until Sept. 22. It offers *tako* sashimi, tempura, sushi, *karaage* (deep fried), *takonotamago umani* (boiled octopus eggs with sweet soya sauce), *iidako teppanyaki* (sautéed, with leeks and onions), and *shabu-shabu* (hot pot with vegetables), *ogurani* (boiled with sweet red bean sauce). Inaho Tei is located at the Mezzanine of Edsa Shangri-La, Manila. Call 633-8888 local 2738/2739.

THE WESTIN PHILIPPINE PLAZA'S China Sea Restaurant offers your favorite duck delicacy, Sept. 20-Oct. 10. Try the Fried Crispy Taro Duck, or take a sip of the Double Boiled Duck with Dried Orange Peel Soup. Relish the Braised Duck with Sea Cucumber and Black Mushroom or Stewed Duck with Chestnuts and Peking Duck. Available on à la carte basis for lunch and dinner. Call 551-5555 local 1528/1530.

THE NEW WORLD RENAISSANCE HOTEL'S Cantonese Restaurant Emperor Court offers "Too Many Shrimps" this month. Shrimp preparations such as Pan-fried Shrimp in Orange Sauce, Steamed Shrimp with Minced Garlic and Glutinous Rice, and Shrimp with Pomelo and Pineapple highlight the restaurant's daily lunch and dinner buffets. Steaks and seafood grilled to perfection are the main attractions for lunch and dinner at the Bocarinos until October. Call 811-6888 local 3338/3318.

THE RICHMONDE GRILL offers a buffet spread of international cuisine. Savor soups, salads, appetizers, sushi, pasta, entrées, meat carving, and desserts popular here and abroad. Call 638-7777 local 3409.

EDSA SHANGRI-LA'S Summer Palace serves a fusion of medicinal herbs and Cantonese cuisine until Sept. 30. Executive sous chef Chan Yiu So spices up boiled prawns, superior shark's fin, steamed chicken, sautéed black pepper beef, fried crab and braised e-fu noodles with medicinal herbs. Call 633-8888 local 2738/2739.



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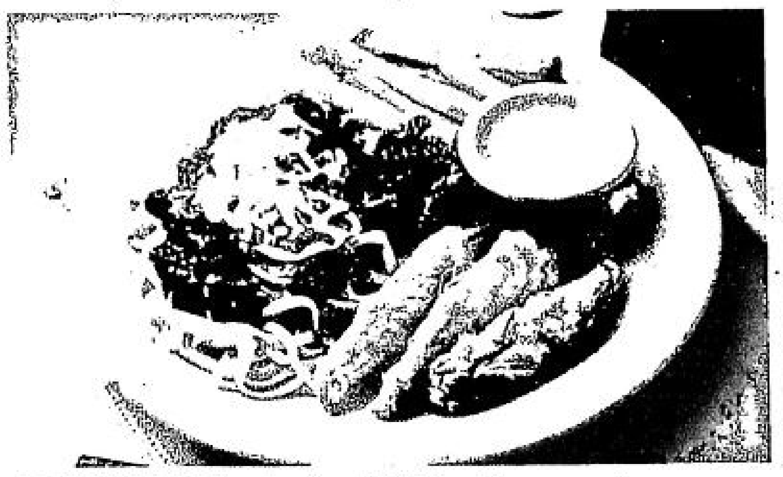
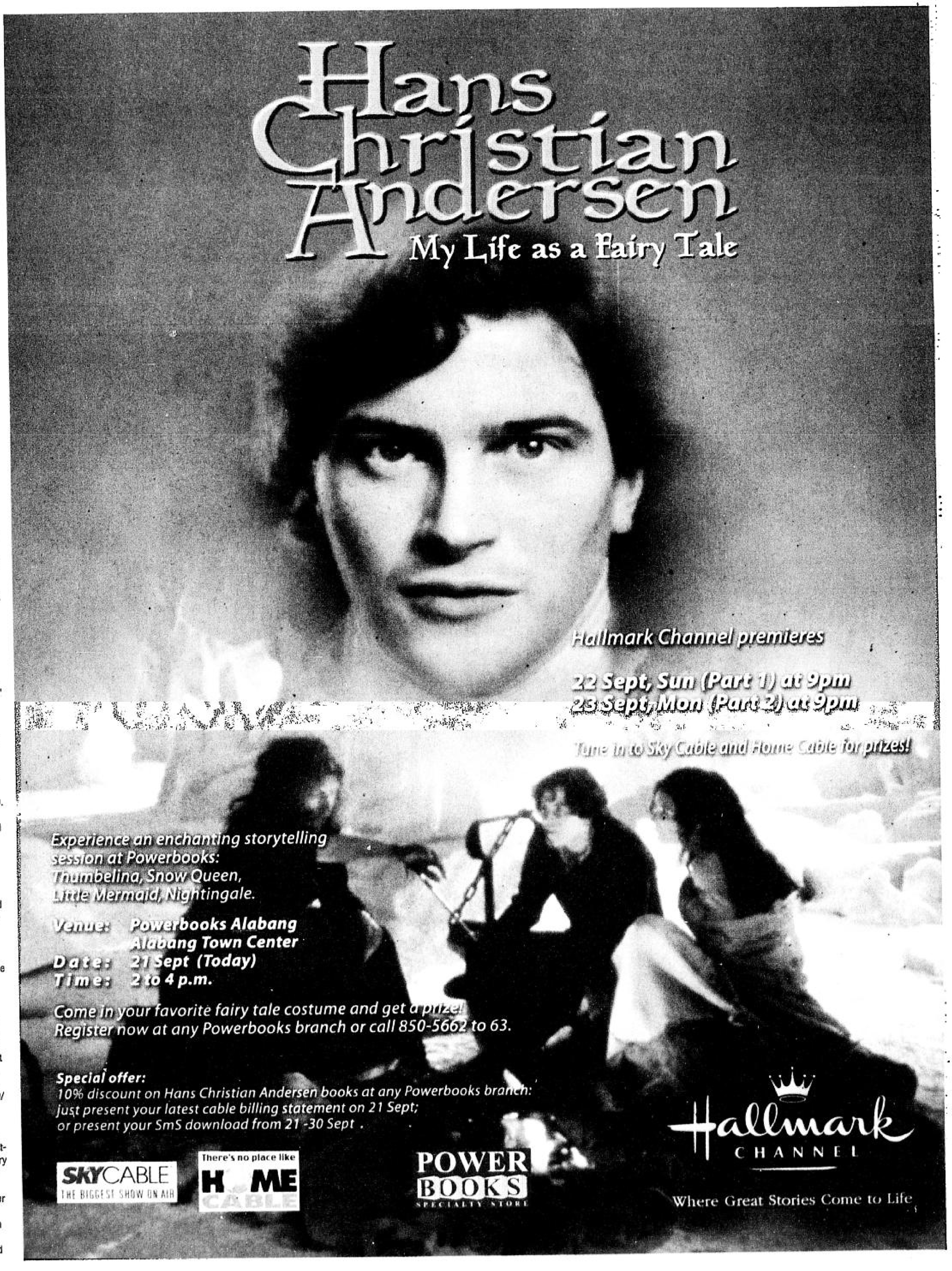


T.G.I. FRIDAY'S Spaghetti and Chicken Fingers combo



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A whole lotta things going on in the Tiny Kitchen

VICKY Veloso-Barrera and students

VICKY Veloso-Barrera's popular summer cooking classes for children have now been extended all year round due to demand. Since Tiny Kitchen, her hands-on cooking school for kids, began four years ago, Vicky has taught almost 200 children to make everything from cookies to pizza to siopao.

New sessions for Tiny Kitchen 2 (for children aged 8 up to teenagers) will begin Sept. 21 and will run for five consecutive Saturdays (except the weekend of Oct. 12). The classes are from 2 to 4 p.m., and four dishes (main dish, side dish, drink and dessert) are taught at each session. Fee is P3,750 for all five sessions, inclusive of all ingredients. Classes will be held at Gourdo's at The Fort Entertainment Center, Taguig (in front of the NBC Tent and near Dencio's).

Interested students may call Barrera at (0916) 516-5035, or Alfred of Gourdo's at 887-0150/887-5007. Enrollment forms are available at Gourdo's and at the shop of Letlet Veloso, Forbes Park. Classes are limited to a maximum of seven students, so early reservations are essential.

Kids will learn how to make pizza, rabbit salad, Oreo milkshake and pinwheel cookies (Sept. 21); oven-fried chicken, baked potatoes, chocolate syrup for milkshake and cupcakes with icing (Sept. 28); siopao, siomai, four seasons and mini apple pie (Oct. 5); pizza burgers, hotdog and potato salad, iced tea and pineapple upside-down cake (Oct. 19); and lasagna, garlic bread, *calamansi* honey drink, brownie pizza (Oct. 26).

Barrera's cooking classes have also spawned two cookbooks published by Books for Pleasure: "Tiny Kitchen" (P100), which has sold close to 10,000 copies since its release three years ago, and the newly released "Not So Tiny Kitchen" (P150), which was based on the Tiny Kitchen 2 classes. The cookbooks are available at National Book Store.

In October, Barrera will be taking classes with Wilton, the famous maker of cake decorating equipment, and upon her return will be offering classes in cake decorating for both children and adults in the month of November. She will also offer classes featuring holiday menus for adults. Reservations for the classes are already being accepted.

'Pako,' the edible fern

From page C1

Consunji, another good cook, hails from, we were served *pako* cooked in *gata* with small shrimp. Even my driver Jerry rated this among the best versions he has had of *pako*.

So, you see there are more ways of preparing *pako* than merely blanching it and tossing it with a vinaigrette dressing.

Here's a couple of recipes from a collection of economical and nutritious alternate foods prepared by the Research Group of the Food Service and Nutrition Department of the University of the Philippines, headed by Leonora N. Panlasigui and Sonia Y. de Leon.

Pako Salad

(Dipolog City)

6 c *pako* leaves, washed well
¾ c native vinegar
1 onion, sliced
1 medium pc ginger, sliced into strips
5 tsp refined sugar
2 tsp salt
3 medium tomatoes, sliced

Steam *pako* leaves. Remove from fire. In a separate bowl, mix vinegar, onion and ginger. Add sugar and salt. Pour this mixture over the *pako* leaves and toss well. Garnish with tomatoes. Serves six.

Pako Salad

(Surigao City)

Same as Dipolog version but omit sugar and add 1 tbsp of *calamansi* juice.

Karabo

3 c *pako*, young leaves and stalks
1 ½ c coconut, grated
2 tbsp native vinegar
1 ½ tsp salt
1 onion, sliced into rings
2 medium tomatoes, sliced into rounds

Blanch *pako* leaves and stalks. Toast grated coconut and add to the *pako* together with the vinegar, salt, onion and tomatoes. Toss lightly. Serves six.

Pako Ginataan

2 ½ c coconut milk
2 c *pako* tops and leaves
1 tsp garlic, crushed
1 small onion, sliced
½ c shrimp, whole
1 ½ tsp salt

Boil *pako* tops and leaves, garlic, onion and shrimp in coconut milk for about 3 mins, stirring continuously to prevent curdling. Season with salt. Serve hot.

Ginataang Susong Pilipit

1 c pure coconut milk
3 ½ coconut milk, second extraction
5 c *susong pilipit*, washed and end portion cut
4 tbsp salt
3 c *pako*

Boil *susong pilipit* in thin coconut milk. Season with salt. Cover and let boil for 10 mins. Add pure coconut milk and *pako*. Cook for another 5 mins.

Note: Aside from Vitamin A, this is also rich in calcium from the susong pilipit.

Eggs and holiday recipes at JMK classes

THE JULIUS Maggi Kitchen (JMK) this month features Intercontinental Hotel Manila executive pastry chef Philippe Agnese in "Cooking with Eggs," and Tai'chi session with instructors from the Wushu Committee of the Filipino-Chinese Amateur Athletic Federation today and on Sept. 24, 26 and 28. Limited seats available. Call 726-9232/726-1016.

Baking expert Heny Sison will demonstrate how to make holiday favorites like Liquor Cakes on Sept. 21 and 23 and French Classic Cookies on Sept. 27. Call 726-5316.

All sessions will be conducted at the Julius Maggi Kitchen, G/F Nestlé Center, 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City. Classes start at 2 p.m.

Barbecue and grill cooking class

BARBECUE is the fine art of cooking a piece of meat over low heat for an extended period of time, thereby creating a culinary delight. Grilling is done over the direct heat of a fire. The object is to sear the outside and concentrate the juices on the inside.

Enroll in the Barbecue and Grills class at the Maya Kitchen Culinary Arts Center on Sept. 21, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Learn different marinating and grilling techniques with lamb, chicken, pork, beef and seafood using special concocted sauces. Fire up recipes such as Tandoori Chicken with Mint and Yogurt Sauce, Tandoori Prawns, Grilled Squid with Cilantro Sauce, Honey Roasted Porkchop, Barbecue Pork Spareribs and Barbecue Beef Steak under the tutelage of Master Chef Sita Ram.

There are other interesting one-day courses such as Bakery and Bakeshop also on Sept. 21, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Bake and Sell Snacks on Sept. 28, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; and the Certificate Course Cooking I (Basic) for Messmen, Stewards and Beginners, with pre-registration on Sept. 24-27, 1:30-5 p.m.

Visit the Maya Kitchen at 8/F Liberty Buliding, A. Arnaiz Avenue (Pasay Road), Makati City, or call 891-1185 or 892-5011 local 108. E-mail mayakitchen@ pacific.net.ph.

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LIFESTYLE

Oktoberfest is just around the corner

ASSORTED grilled sausages with sauerkraut and mustard

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Aegis
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SM CENTERPOINT

Ready for beer-drinking, yodeling, nail-hammering and sausage-eating contests? The NBC Tent is the place for you come Sept. 27 and 28

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Romy Homillada

THE OKTOBERFEST celebration in Germany is an abundance of flowing beer, Bavarian music and good cheer. Indeed, more than a million gallons of beer are consumed in Munich during the 16-day autumn festival, and no celebration is complete without food.

In true Bavarian tradition, Mandarin Oriental, Manila presents the world's biggest outdoor festival dubbed Oktoberfest 2002 on Sept. 27 and 28, 7 p.m.-1 a.m., at the NBC Tent, Bonifacio Global City.

On the buffet table will be German delicacies such as Beef Tartar, German Sausage Salad, Goulash Soup, Baked Ham on Sour Bread Dough with Red Wine Sauce and Mustard, Beef Braised in Sweet and Sour Sauce, Roast Pork Knuckle with Red Cabbage, Assorted Grill Sausages with Sauerkraut and Mustard, Smoked Porkloin with Mashed Potato and Caraway Jus and desserts like Apple Strudel, Streusel Kuchen and Kasesahne Torte. Unlimited mugs of beer will complement the spread.

Johnny Litton will host the event's festivities, which will be highlighted by live band music from the 11-piece Bavarian Sound Express. Dressed in their authentic *lederhosen* (leather shorts worn with suspenders, white shirts and knee-high stockings) costumes, the Munich-based band will play an extensive repertoire of "oompapa" music throughout the evening.

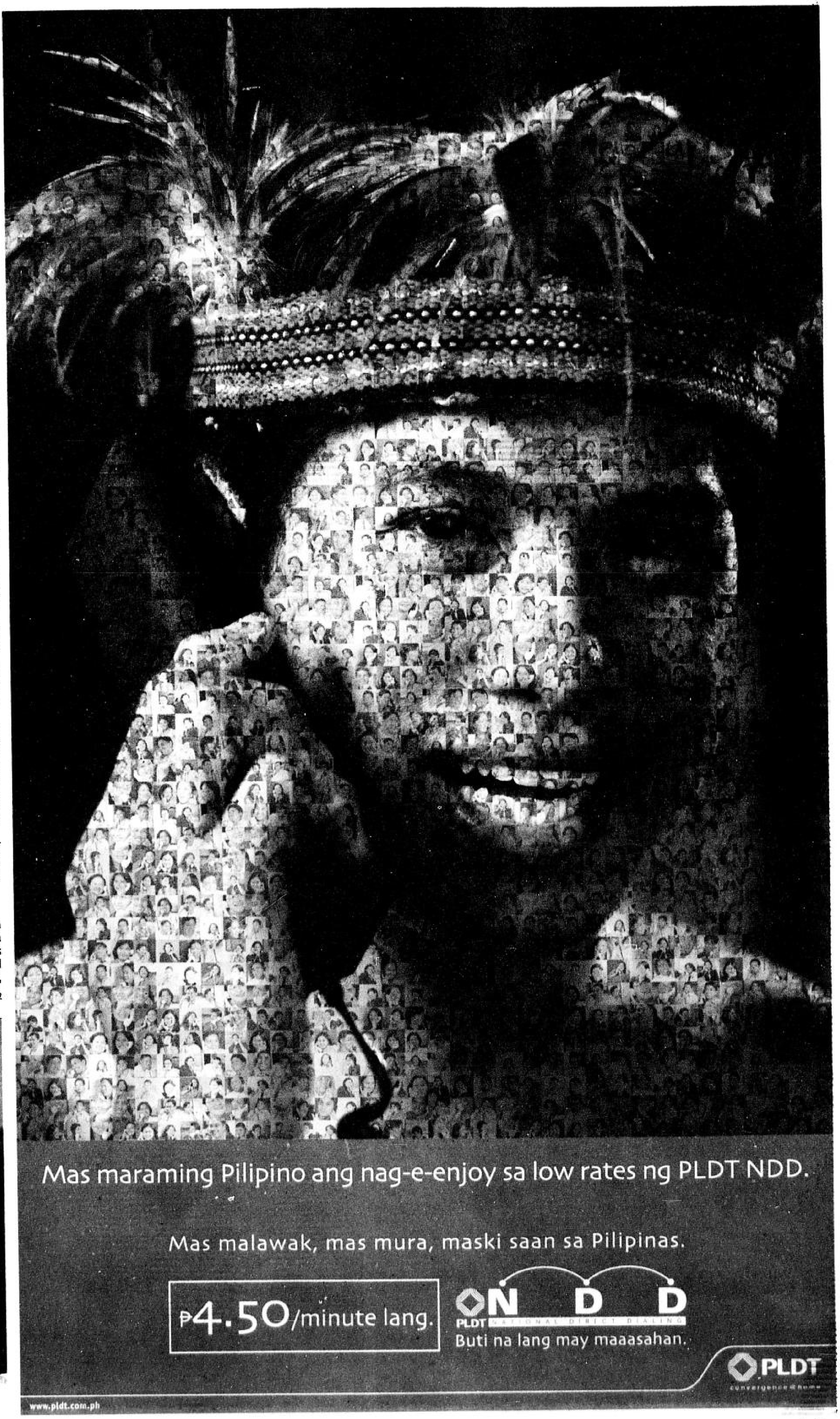
To add to the ambience, the service staff will don Gamsbarthut felt hats, and an entrance booth will sell chocolate heart cookies, T-shirts and *lederhosen*-garbed teddy bears.

Fun celebration

The Oktoberfest tradition all started in 1810, when Crown Prince Ludwig hosted a gala to celebrate his marriage to Princess Theresa. It was so much fun that it evolved into an annual celebration of German food,

OKTOBERFEST/ p.D2

HELMUT Gaisberger, GM of Mandarin Oriental Manila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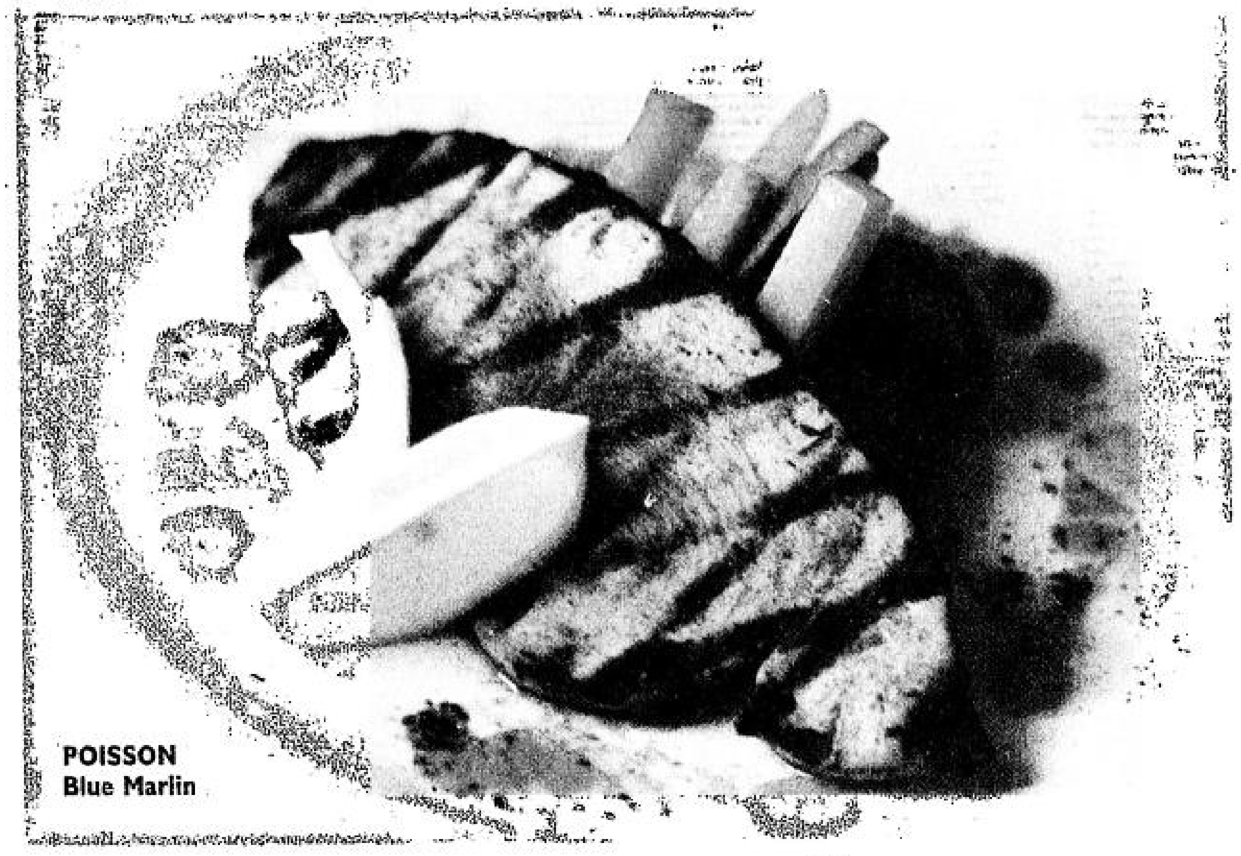
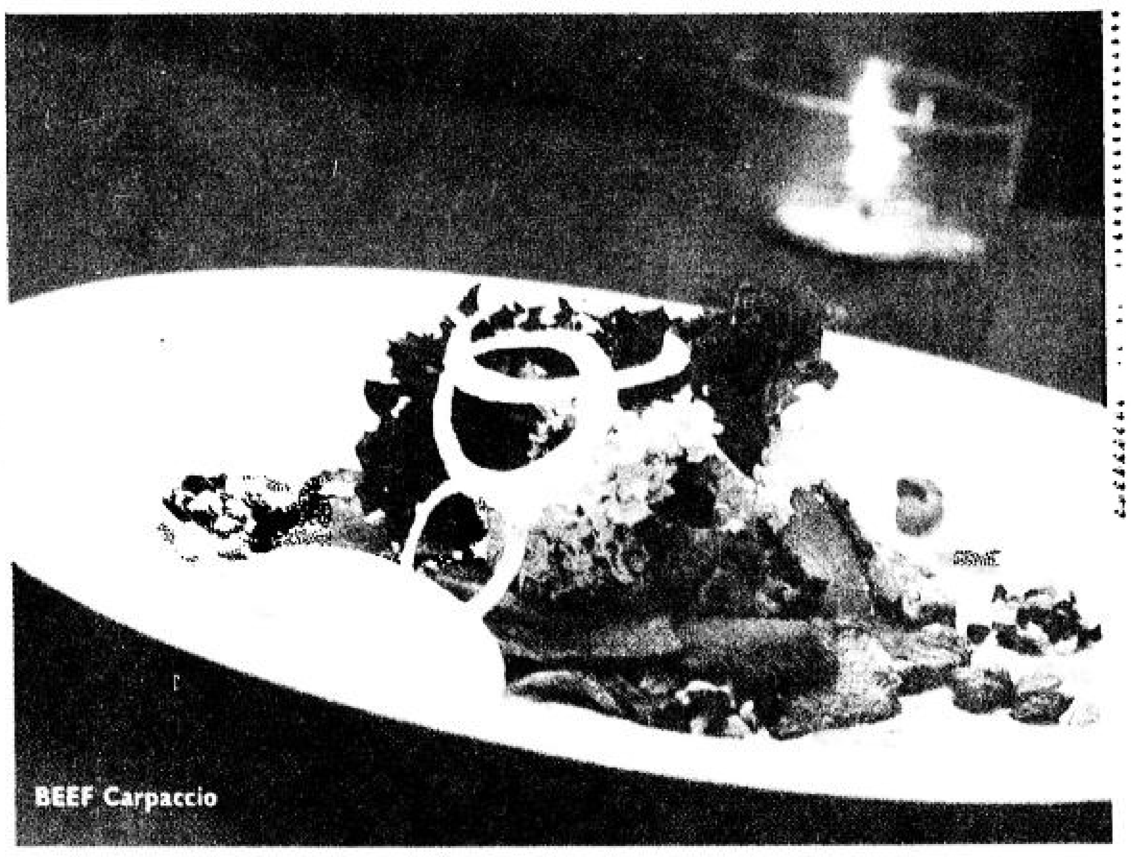


POISSON Blue Marlin



BEEF Carpaccio

Passion for fusion

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Mike Alquinto

Savarin serves affordable East-meets-West dishes from the kitchen of Walter Puck-trained Robert Libunao

FOODIES who frequent established restaurant rows such as Jupiter Street in Makati or Tomas Morato Avenue in Quezon City may think Savarin (pronounced *sa-va-ranh*) is out of the way. But people behind the restaurant believe this disadvantage is outweighed by its being "out of the ordinary."

Located on Kalayaan Avenue in Diliman, QC, the barely 2-year-old French-Mediterranean restaurant and wine bar (tel. 925-6192/6193) is said to have already developed loyal patrons.

QC Mayor Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte is reportedly among those who crave resident chef Robert Libunao's fusion cuisine.

"Filipinos have become more adventurous and open to new possibilities when it comes to food," says Libunao, who once trained under Walter Puck of Spagos in Beverly Hills. "That's why fusion cuisine is here to stay."

Libunao's seared Australian salmon fillet, for example, is cooked in tomato coulies and balsamic vinaigrette. The chef is able to combine the scents and flavors of East and West by marinating the dish in cilantro and balsamic vinaigrette.

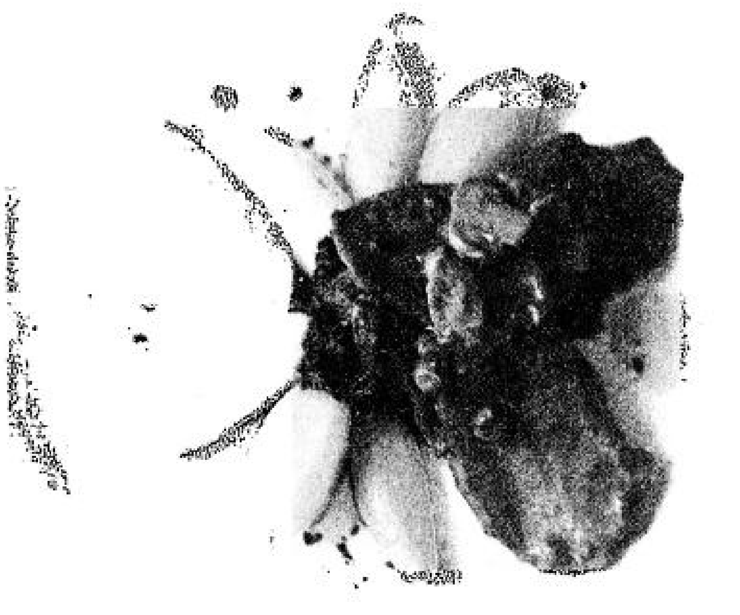
Cilantro is a common Asian ingredient, according to Libunao. "Balsamic is unique to Europe, particularly Italy."

His steak sauce also follows the same principle—*espagnole* or thick, brown sauce made from meat stock is flavored with Thai cilantro and Vietnamese sweet basil. By using Oriental ingredients, Libunao hopes to make his dishes more palatable to Pinoy taste buds.

And, perhaps, also easier on their pockets. An order of tenderloin steak, for instance, can set them back by only P220. Same with the fillet mignon wrapped in bacon and topped with chicken liver and demi-glace sauce.

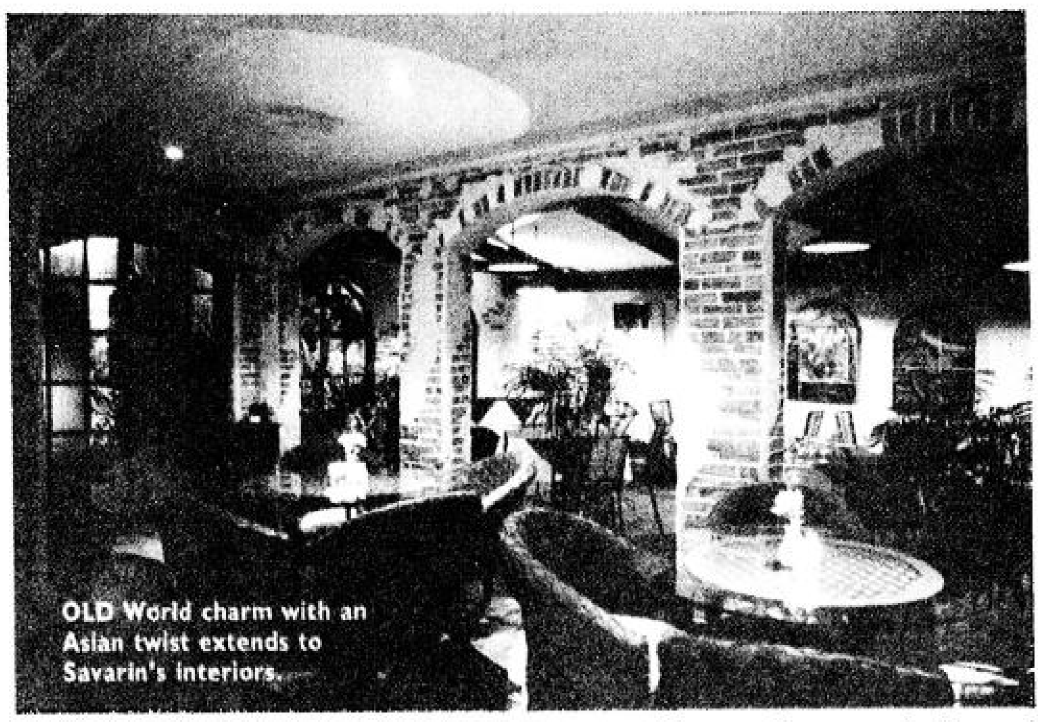
Fish entrées such as the *lapu-lapu* fillet in white wine sauce with almond soufflé and the grilled blue marlin steak topped with herb butter sauce are unbelievably priced at P200 per order.

Other house specialties include the Paella Beatriz or French Paella (P300) and the Lengua à la Savarin (P170), tender ox tongue with bacon, chicken liver and green peas simmered in demi-glace sauce.



LENGUA à la Savarin

POWER TRIO. Frocy Pascual, chef Robert Libunao and Ed Enriquez



OLD World charm with an Asian twist extends to Savarin's interiors.

The restaurant also offers Italian wines of various vintage. If only to live up to its reputation, Libunao plans to add French names to its wine list. He's currently teaching his kitchen staff to make fresh pasta.

Why the affordable prices? "It's part of our motto of providing value for money," says Ed Enriquez, Savarin's vice president. "We don't want to turn off customers just because the place looks expensive."

Despite Savarin's formal ambiance, the restaurant is cozy enough for family dinners. Couples out for a romantic dinner need not wear gowns or jackets. "In fact, guests can walk in without reservations," says Enriquez. "That's what fine dining with a casual twist is all about."

Savarin's interior also fuses Eastern and Western influences. Glass-topped tables and native furniture pieces made of wicker and rattan contrast with the distressed brick walls, Vigan tiles and French-inspired apple glass doors and windows.

"All our furniture pieces and baskets are of export quality," says Frocy Pascual, Savarin's president. "Every piece is for sale."

Such a creative interplay of indoor elements comes as no surprise. Through Isla Filipina International Inc., Enriquez and Pascual have been exporting furniture to the United States and Europe before they ventured into the restaurant business.

"Savarin is actually our former residence," says Pascual. "When we moved our operations from Manila to Clark, we wanted a place where we could unwind and eat good food. That was when we decided to convert the house into a restaurant."

The entire second floor, which can easily accommodate 25 people, and parts of the ground floor have been converted to several function rooms. "We can arrange a special menu based on your budget," says Libunao. "Demand for private functions has been growing."

Fusion cuisine or not, one of Savarin's most charming come-ons that's probably worth the trip is a piano in the middle of the dining area. Guests are welcome to accompany the in-house pianist as he plays standard tunes into the wee hours.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

Oktoberfest is just around the corner

From page D1

drink and culture.

Oktoberfest used to begin in October but because of the bad weather during this month, it was changed to September. These days, the celebration lasts 16 days ending on the first full weekend in October. It starts with an opening parade of more than 6,000 participants. At the head of the parade are teams of decorated horses pulling the colorful *bierwagen*, which represent the major breweries in Munich.

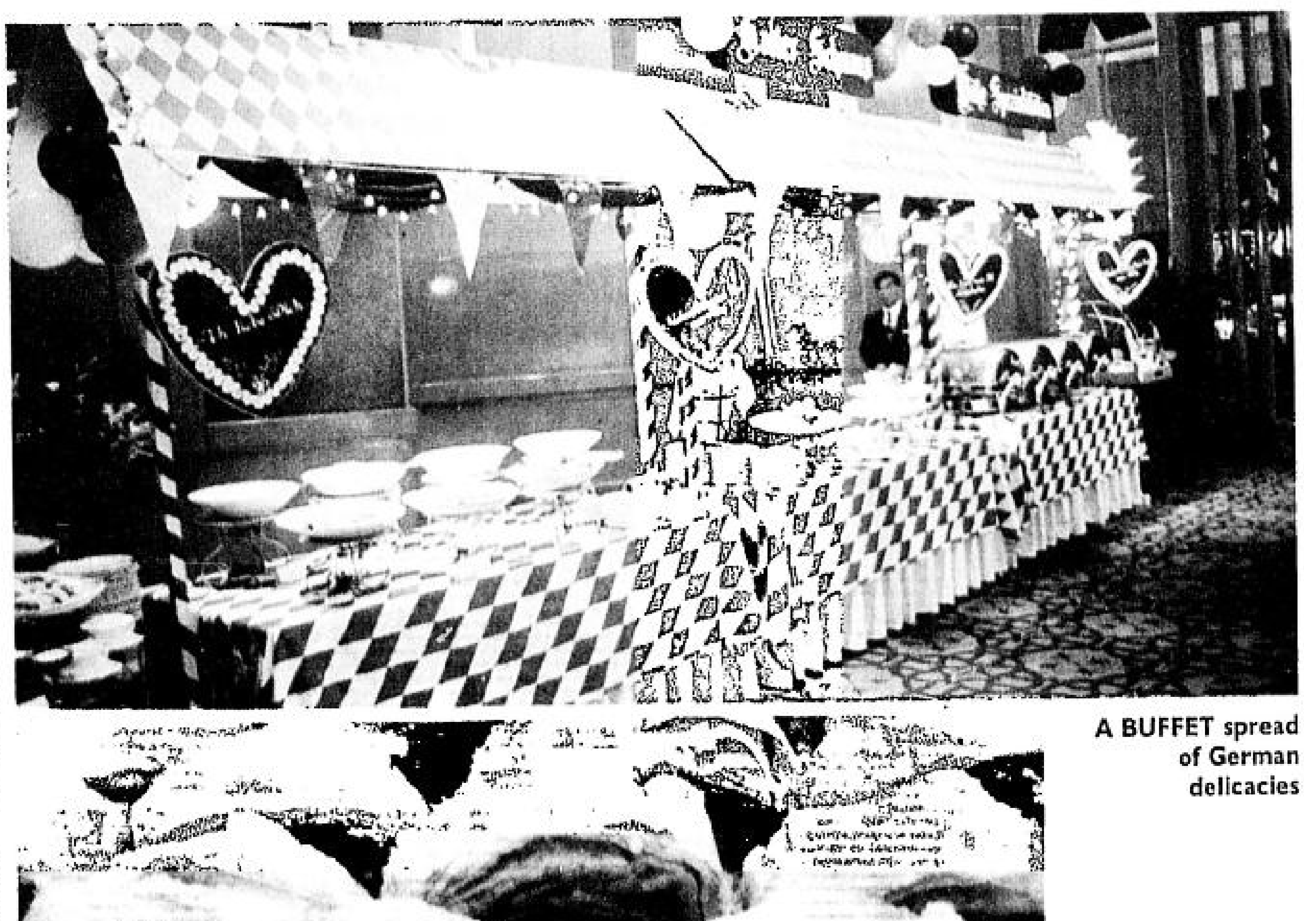
Beer plays an important role in this festival. But for Germans, beer is not just a drink for celebrations. Some enjoy beer with their midday and evening meals. There's even a nonalcoholic *kinderbier* for children made out of malt.

During the festival, the Oktoberfest fairground erupts in a frenzy of rides, dancing and strangers strolling arm in arm down rows of picnic tables while the beer god stirs tons of beer, pretzels and wurst in a bubbling caldron of fun.

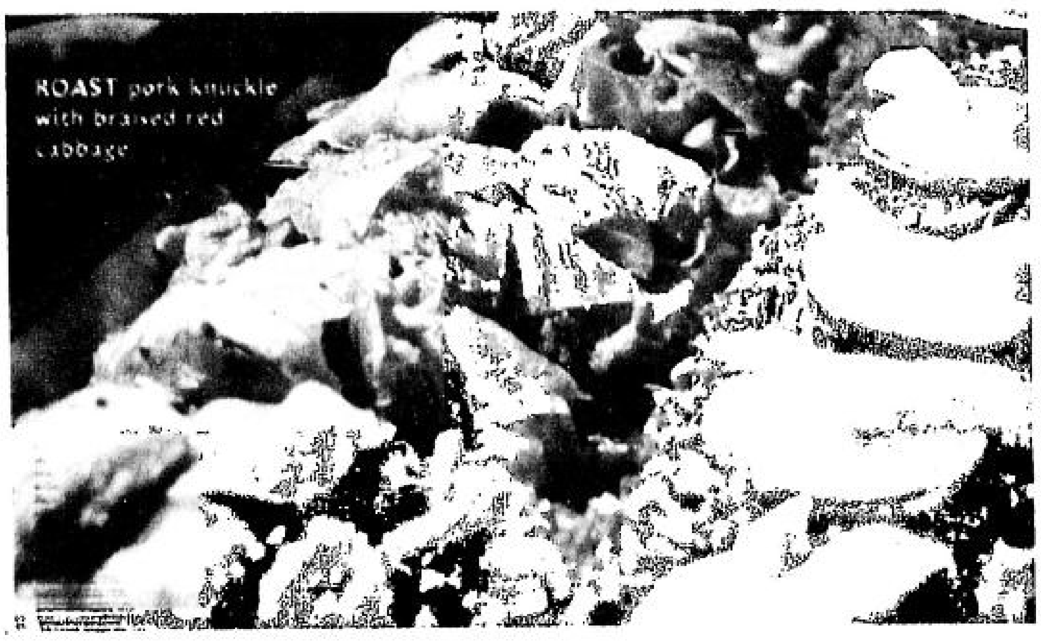
"Beer-drinking, yodeling, nail-hammering and sausage-eating contests are among the games which are expected to bring nonstop laughter, fun and excitement to this year's grander celebration," says Helmut Gaisberger, general manager of Mandarin Oriental Manila.

Call Mandarin Oriental Manila at 750-8888.

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph



A BUFFET spread of German delicacies

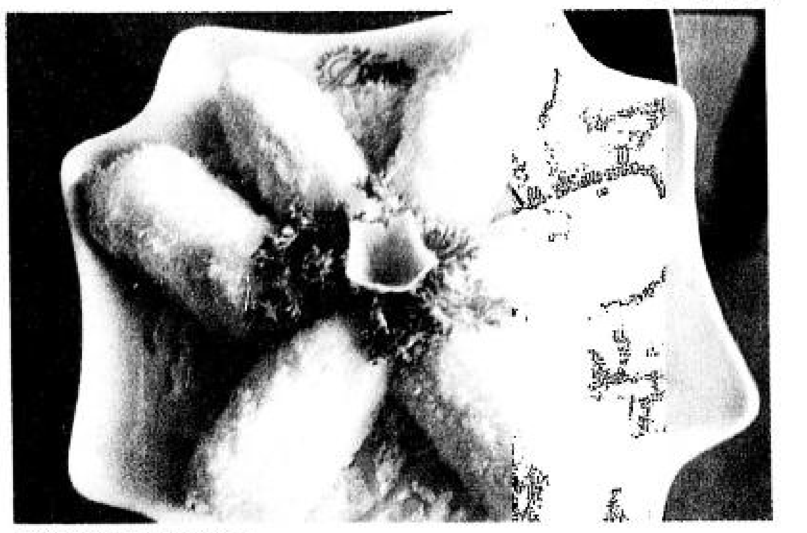


ROAST pork knuckle with braised red cabbage

APPLE strudel

PORK Asado Roasted

BEEF Brisket with Tendon



SEAFOOD Salad Roll

A flavorful family affair

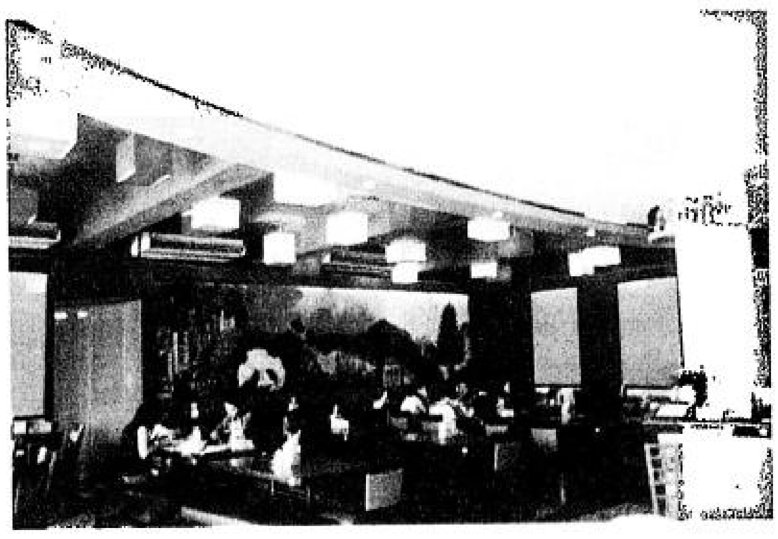
By Remy Umerez
Contributor

EVERY city boasts of a restaurant row, and in Quezon City that distinction goes to Tomas Morato Street, where movie press conferences are held almost every other day and there are all kinds of cuisine for everybody.

Almost every month, you see a restaurant opening on Morato, either sandwiched between a bank and a landmark or nesting on its own, bidding its time to be recognized.

Among the more recent ones to open is Flavours of China at Unit 103/104 G/F, Tomas Morato Plaza corner Roces Avenue (tel. 927-6746 and 927-6785). Their signage may be partly hidden but the resto is not difficult to find. Coming from E. Rodriguez, one can find it on the right side (across McDonalds).

The décor is a fusion of something old and something new. On the wall is a huge painting, half of which depicts the Great Walls of China and the other half set in the modern city of China.



MICHAEL Ang with father Fernando and sister Jenny

Young managers

Flavours of China is being run by the Ang children, namely, Michael, Jennifer, Jinky, Janice and Jeanette. Fernando and Concepcion Ang can only be too proud that their children turned out to be hardworking and responsible.

Michael, 32, a graduate of De La Salle University, takes care of the business side, while Jennifer, a Centro Escolar University graduate and a non-practicing dentist by profession, is the overall manager.

The brother-sister team works full-time, especially on Sundays when the place is packed with dining families. The two other sisters alternately help in taking orders and attending to customers.

The Angs believe that if you serve good food and greet customers by their first names, your sales are bound to double. Good PR is a must in the restaurant business, and lots of patience, too," says Michael.

Another sister, Jinky, an HRM graduate of St. Scholastica's, operates the family-owned Tempura, a year-old Japanese restaurant in Retiro, QC.

The success of Tempura made Michael decide to open Flavours of China.

During their first week of operation, they encountered little problems, like confusion over taking orders and inconsistency in food quantity. All these have been ironed out. A high-tech food ordering station has been installed, and food is now weighed before being served.

Michael stresses how careful they are regarding consistency in flavor and affordability. He maintains that they are still the lowest priced in town and that they give generous servings.

The orange-colored menu attests to it. For appetizers, Seaweeds with Century egg costs P130, while a combination platter (of seaweeds with Century egg, *asado*, Peking duck and *lechon* macao) costs P195. One-fourth of a Peking duck is only P190.

Seafood Spinach Soup, which consists of minced fish fillet, shrimp, squid and tofu, is good for four to five persons at P190.

The bestsellers are marked with white thumbs on the menu, and among them are Sweet and Sour Crispy Pork (P140), Salt and Pepper Spareribs (P145), and Chicken and Prawn Hot Salad (P150).

Beef lovers should not miss out on Sizzling Beef Tenderloin in Flavours of China Sauce (P240) or Beef Brisket with Tendon (P165).

A must in the seafood list is Seafood Salad Roll with stuffing of crabstick, fish and shrimp rolled with rice. Six pieces cost P220.

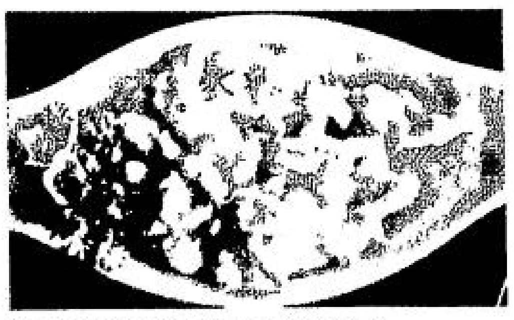
The veggies look like they have just been harvested, and their freshness is maintained with sprinklings of oyster sauce or garlic. The surprises are: Chinese Kangkong with *bagoong* (P90), Eggplant with minced pork (P110), Broccoli Flower with oyster (P120) Taiwan *pechay* with garlic (P100), Asparagus tips with oyster (P100), Kaylan leaves with oyster (P100) and mixed vegetables (P120).

Rice toppings are also available, and there are three choices: BBQ pork *asado* rice (P110), Soy Chicken Rice (P100), and Braised Beef Brisket Rice (P130). Then there's Flavours of China Fried Rice (P160), which is good for three to four persons.

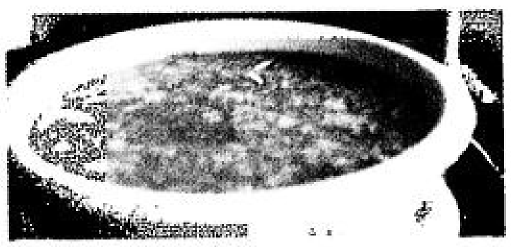
For the Ang family, dining out and discovering new tastes and flavors are a weekly enjoyment that helps them create new dishes. They constantly seek suggestion from chefs and diners as well.

But what are the real flavors of China? The Angs would rather keep them a family secret.

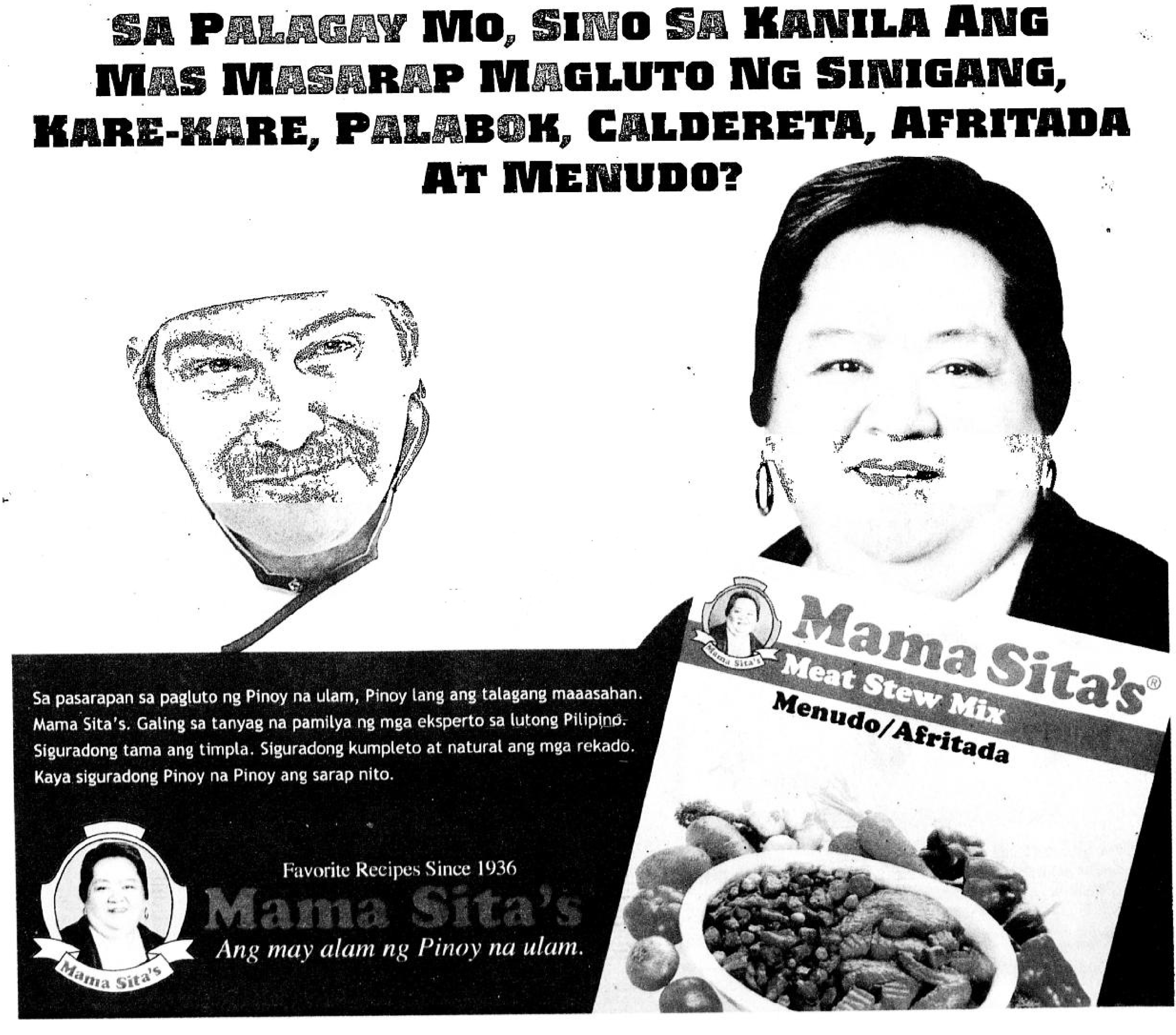
MAPO Tofu



CHICKEN and Prawn Hot Salad



SEAFOOD Spinach Soup


SA PALAGAY MO, SINO SA KANILA ANG MAS MASARAP MAGLUTO NG SINIGANG, KARE-KARE, PALABOK, CALDERETA, AFRITADA AT MENUDO?

Sa pasarapan sa pagluto ng Pinoy na ulam, Pinoy lang ang talagang maaasahan. Mama Sita's. Galing sa tanyag na pamilya ng mga eksperto sa lutong Pilipino. Siguradong tama ang timpla. Siguradong kumpleto at natural ang mga rekado. Kaya siguradong Pinoy na Pinoy ang sarap nito.

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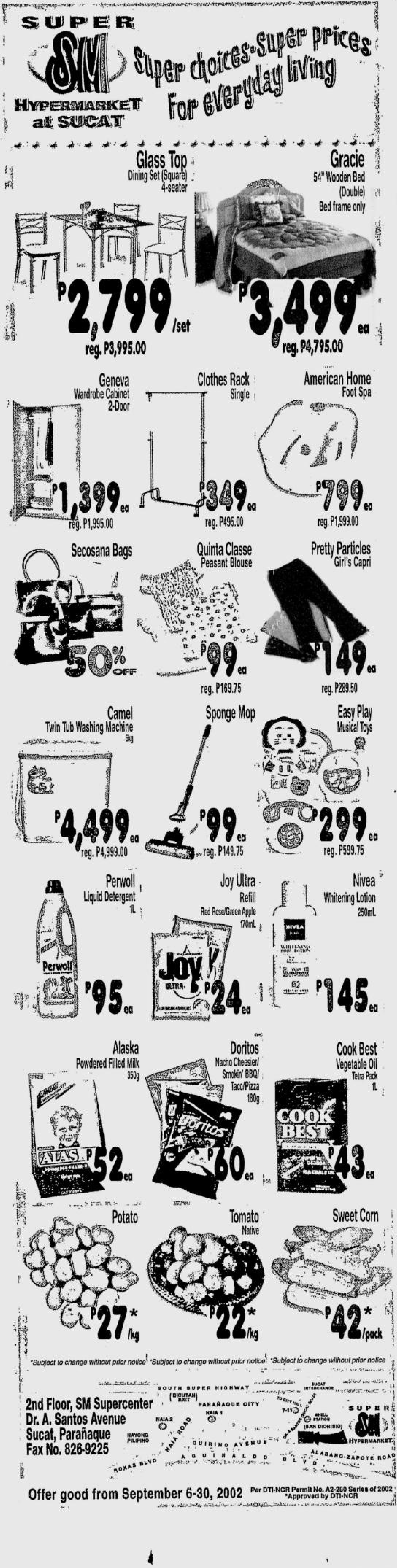

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SINGAPOREAN Chili Crab Pao

Hot buns, hot stuff

Text by Leah Salterio
Photos by Romy Homillada

ASADO or *bola-bola* may be the only *siopao* varieties that you are familiar with, if you haven't been to this new restaurant in Greenbelt Makati that has reinvented *siopao* and serves it in every imaginable way.

Better still, the *siopao* is cooked while you wait and is not simply kept warm in a steamer.

Chili Crab Pao (tel. 813-6197) is the first business venture of three male friends—Roby Alampay, Kenneth Gacho and Robin Remulla—who share a common passion for eating.

"Sometime last year, after we watched a movie at Glorietta, we ate and talked about why the *siopao* only comes in two choices: the *asado* and *bola-bola*," Roby shares.

"Then we recalled our eating experience in Singapore, where the chili crab is served with a *pao* on the side. That was when we thought of experimenting with the *siopao*, and that was also how the name of the restaurant came about."

A brilliant idea

The concept of reinventing the *siopao* came easy to the three friends, since Kenneth is a sous chef who has worked at the Tivoli Grill Restaurant of Mandarin Oriental Manila.

"So we started brainstorming on a daily basis about how we would serve the *siopao*," Roby says. "Kenneth also thought about adding soups and salads to the menu." Last December, Kenneth quit his hotel job to set up their restaurant (he was rehired recently).

Their wives, however, were initially unconvinced about their husbands' plan.

"They were saying it was just another one of our brilliant ideas that would not materialize, so that sort of pressured us," Roby says.

Eventually, however, their spouses also became partners in the business. Roby and his wife, Joy Flavier, were batchmates at the UP Integrated School with Anne Alejandrino, Robin's wife. Kenneth's wife, Martee Rosal, used to manage a branch of Cabalen Restaurant and also worked at the Palm Garden Restaurant.

"Marty and Kenneth know everything, from preparing the food to managing a restaurant," Roby says.

Finding the venue proved to be the next tough task for the first-time entrepreneurs. One mall was only giving them a 10-sq m space, and the management was also requiring a commission from the sales.

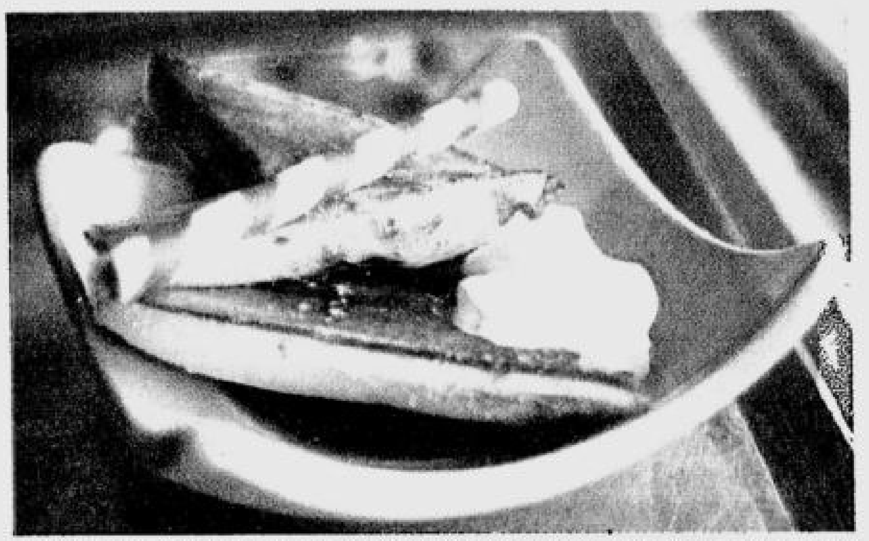
"So we scouted for other locations," Roby recalls. "I went around looking for vacant spaces. I saw the laundromat at the ground floor of LPL Towers along Legaspi Street and it had a 'for rent' sign. We almost didn't get the space because we were late for a day."

Not a dimsum house

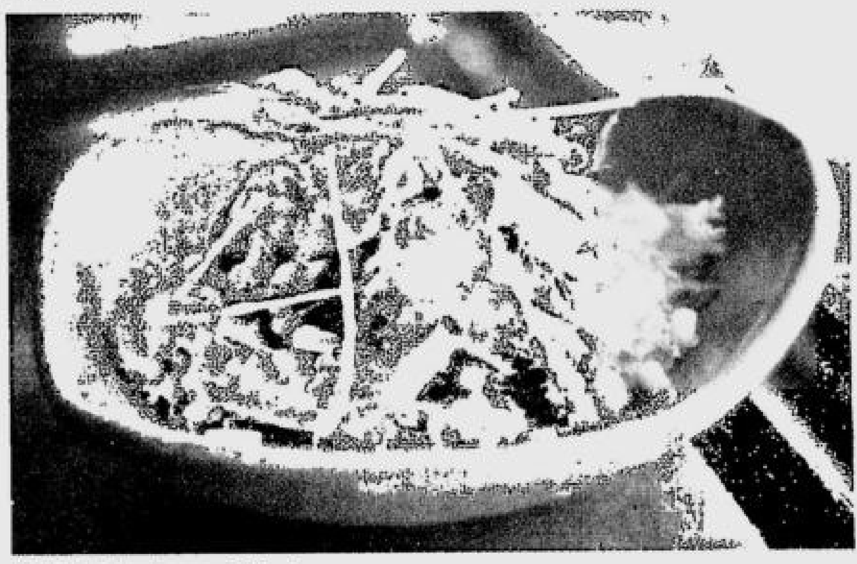
Young architect Peng Porciuncula was tapped to do the colorful design and interiors for the 35-sq m space that was converted into the Chili Crab Pao restaurant.

"We veered away from the usual red and white colors of a typical Chinese restaurant," Roby points out. "We used bright colors to make the place different. We want to emphasize that this is not a dimsum house. We don't serve *mami* or *siomai*."

Robin, who is a furniture exporter, designed the chairs and tables for the restaurant. Even with construction a month behind, Chili Crab Pao opened last March to cater to Makati's working population and residents.



CINNAMON-Baked Bananas with whipped cream and vanilla-muscovado sauce



WARM Mushroom Salad

The restaurant's "all-original premium specialty" is *siopao* with "absolutely no monosodium glutamate" (vetsin).

"Kenneth spent five weeks perfecting the dough before working on any filling for the *pao*," Roby grants.

The first menu included *siopao* with stuffing like *kare-kare* and *dinuguan*.

"They turned out to be weird for a lot of people so we experimented on other varieties," Roby says.

For only P60, you can have a Cantonese *pao* (in naturally raised fermented dough) with any choice or combination of fillings, including Singaporean chili crab, mixed sausages, Char-Siu porkloin with Chinese honey ham, chicken-pork *adobo*, Hainan chicken, garlic shrimps with oyster sauce, roasted honey duck and braised pork knuckles with shiitake mushrooms.

Updated menu

The premium *pao* comes in lighter, fluffier yeast dough, with stuffing like Char-Siu porkloin, roasted honey duck and Singaporean chili crabs. For the non-carnivorous, there are the sautéed Asian mushroom and chuichow vegetables *siopao*. The *paos* are served with crispy veggies, usually fried potato, taro or *camote*. Hainan chicken broth is served as a house tea.

Three guys have reinvented the 'pao' and are doing brisk business

CHILI Crab Pao owners Roby and Joy Alampay and Martee Rosal

The menu was recently updated to include new items like warm mushroom salad, summer Japanese salad, molo soup, and the to-die-for cinnamon-baked bananas with whipped cream and vanilla-muscovado sauce.

The food is served in custom-made plates from Cavite.

Fortunately, Chili Crab Pao has been doing good business since it opened six months ago.

"Better than we projected," Roby asserts. "The place can accommodate very few people but we make more from take-out and delivery."

And despite formidable competition from the newly opened restaurants in Greenbelt 2 and 3, Chili Crab Pao has proven that the best place to eat is outside the mall. Located across the street from Burger King and Häagen-Dazs at the old Greenbelt, it is open from 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Prominent walk-in customers include psychic Jaime Licauco, society columnist Maurice Arcache, Makati Rep. Teddyboy Locsin, actress Carmina Villaroel, TV host Angel Aquino, and senators Loren Legarda and, of course, Juan Flavier (who is Joy's dad).